Muña: No changes to quarantine rules. PAGE 2
BOE approves salary adjustment analysis for school execs. PAGE 6

Hafa Adai!

75¢

Saipan Tribune

THE CNMI'S FIRST DAILY NEWSPAPER

Volume XXXI, Issue No. 30

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PUA applications soon accepted

By KIMBERLY A. BAUTISTA
kimberly_bautista@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

The CNMI Department of Labor will start accepting Pandemic Unemployment Assistance applications next week.

In a news statement yesterday, it said that DOL will begin accepting applications for PUA and Federal Pandemic Unemployment Compensation from Feb. 16, 2021, through March 13, 2021.

See DOL on Page 4

AT A GLANCE

As of 7pm, Feb. 11, 2021

GUAM	OLD	NEW	TOTAL
Positive	7,683	3	7,686
Recovered	7,460	7	7,467
Active	86	3	89
Deaths	130	0	130
Cumulative Number of Persons Tested			120,324

SAIPAN	OLD	NEW	TOTAL
Positive	133	0	133
Traced via Travel Screening	107	0	107
Traced via Community Screening	26	0	26
Deaths	2	0	2
Cumulative Number of Persons Tested			26,131*
Days since last community transmission			176

VACCINATIONS IN THE CNMI
Saipan: 12,533
Tinian: 141
Rota: 353

*Total count includes the number of persons tested on Saipan, Tinian, and Rota. With guidance from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, CHCC has opted not to report active and recovered cases.

Source: Joint Information Center - Guam, Commonwealth Healthcare Corp.

COMMUNITY VULNERABILITY

LEGEND:
Red: Least safe
Orange
Yellow
Blue
Green: Safest

Source: Office of the Governor

Propst: IPI giving $250 in travel money to departing Turkish workers 'extortionary'

» Propst calls another meeting to look at IPI issues

FERDIE DE LA TORRE
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REPORTER

Each of the 16 Turkish workers that Imperial Pacific International (CNMI) LLC repatriated last Monday were allegedly given $250 each in travel money in a move that Rep. Edwin K. Propst (D-Saipan) now describes as "extortionary" because the workers were allegedly made to sign a document relinquishing IPI from all future financial obligations to them.

See PROPST on Page 4

PSS BOARD MEETING
CNMI Board of Education chair Andrew L. Orsini, center, and his colleagues and officials of the Public School System met yesterday. Also in photo are vice chair Herman Atalig and board members Antonio Borja of Tinian and Gregoy Borja of Saipan, teacher representative Phyllis Ain, PSS associate commissioner for Administrative Service Eric Magofna, Federal Program's officer Tim Thornburgh, Human Resources officer Lucretia Borja, Finance and Budget director Arlene Lizama, legal counsel Tiberius Mocanu, Accreditation Program manager Marian Tudela, and board office manager Valeria Malwelbug. PSS

Story on Page 6

IPI offers 'reset and recover' plan

By FERDIE DE LA TORRE
ferdie_delatorre@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

Imperial Pacific International (CNMI) LLC has outlined a "reset and recover strategy" that will involve a raft of amendment to the casino license agreement and new legislations that it says will enable it to solve its financial dilemma, finish its projects, and

IPI PROPOSALS
- Pay $5.7 million in 2020 casino license fee
- Pay remaining $9.8M in 5 installments
- Reduce $3M casino regulatory fee
- Legalization of online gaming
- Legislation to separate casino from hotel
- New 2026 deadline to finish building casino

See IPI on Page 4

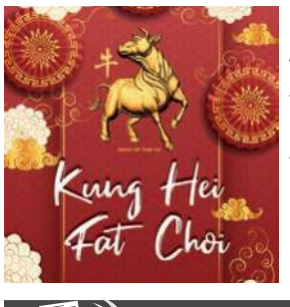
Mobil gas prices increase 12 cents

Mobil Oil Marianas raised its fuel prices by another 12 cents yesterday afternoon. Shell Marianas is expected to follow suit shortly.

Mobil raised it prices from $4.08 for a gallon of Extra fuel to $4.20 per gallon. Mobil's Supreme fuel also increased from $4.53 per gallon to $4.65 per gallon. A gallon of Mobil's Diesel is now $4.38 per gallon.

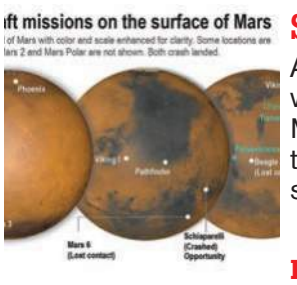
See GAS on Page 4

INSIDE



SUPPLEMENT
Today's edition comes with a pullout supplement that welcomes the Year of the Ox.
PAGE 11

BUSINESS
PSG Professional Corp. has grown with the times, always evolving and adding more services.
PAGE 19



SCIENCE & TECH
A Chinese spacecraft went into orbit around Mars in an expedition to land a rover on the surface.
PAGE 22

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DESPITE NEW CDC GUIDANCE

Muña: No changes to quarantine rules

By JUSTINE NAUTA
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REPORTER

Despite a new Centers for Disease Control and Prevention guidance for fully vaccinated individuals, the CNMI won't be implementing it any time soon, according to Commonwealth Healthcare Corp. chief executive officer Esther Muña.

The new CDC guidance states that fully vaccinated individuals may be allowed to skip quarantine even if exposed to COVID-19 positive individuals but Muña said the CNMI's COVID-19 protocols won't change.

The new CDC guidance says fully vaccinated persons will no longer be required to quarantine following exposure to someone with COVID-19. The guidance does not refer to travel and only focuses on those who may be exposed to positive cases. As such, all arriving passengers in the CNMI who claim to have already been vaccinated will still have to go through first- and fifth-day testing and will not be released until they test negative.

The COVID-19 vaccine is a two-shot regimen, which means it will require two shots to be administered. According to the CDC definition, a fully vaccinated individual is one who has had both shots, with at least two weeks having passed since the second shot. This is because it takes two weeks to build full immunity after the second dose of the vaccine, according to the CDC.

Additionally, CDC said that persons in the community, or outpatient setting, who have had a known COVID-19 exposure should not seek vaccination until their quarantine period (two weeks) has ended to avoid potentially exposing health care personnel and other persons to COVID-19 during the vaccination visit.

CDC also said that people who do meet the criteria to skip out on quarantine still have to take precautionary measures such as washing of hands, waiting at a distance, and wearing a mask.

"Fully vaccinated persons who do not quarantine should still watch for symptoms of COVID-19 for 14 days following an exposure. If they experience symptoms, they should be clinically evaluated for COVID-19, including SARS-CoV-2 testing, if indicated," said CDC.

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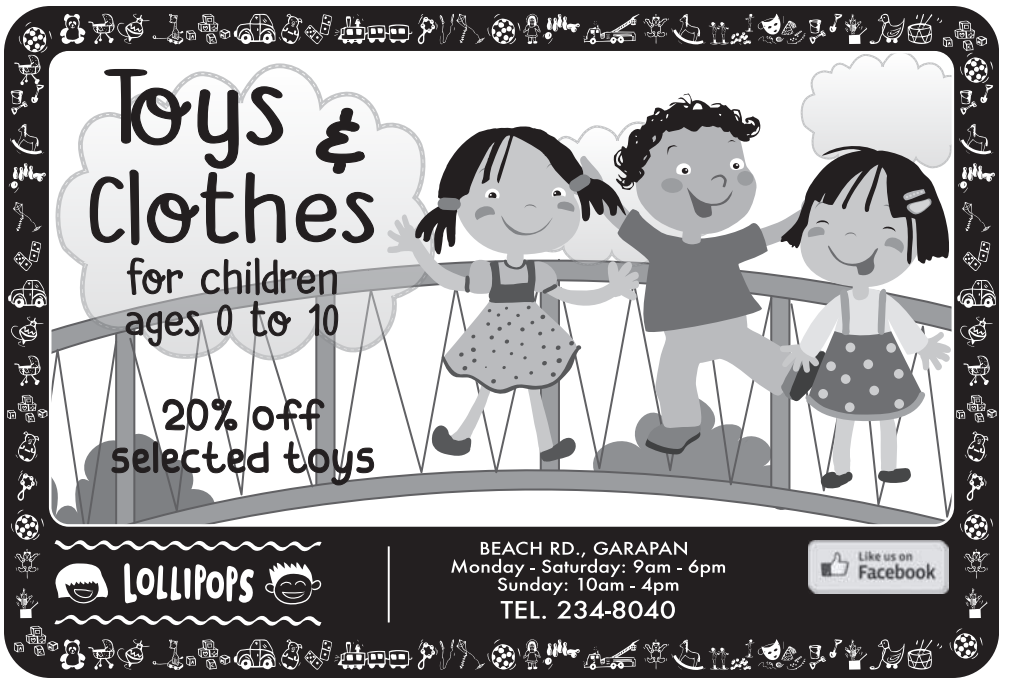

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Updates sought on Medicaid program, other federal grants

By FERDIE DE LA TORRE
ferdie_delatorre@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

The House of Representatives' Committee on Health and Welfare will hold a hearing today, Friday, at 9am, at the House's chamber to obtain updates about the CNMI's Medicaid program and other federal grants.

Specifically, the committee wants to hear from the CNMI Medicaid Agency on the Medicaid program and implementation of Public Law 21-28, which established the Commonwealth Medicaid Agency as a separate agency under the Office of the Governor.

Also, the committee wants updates from the Northern Marianas Housing Corp. on its implementation of regular grants and the CNMI's Community Development Block Grant-Disaster Recovery grant action plan, particularly in the areas of housing, food assistance, and community development.

Sablan

Last October, the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development approved the CNMI's CDBG-DR action plan that will bring in $244 million for the CNMI's recovery needs after the devastation of Super Typhoon Yutu and Typhoon Mangkut in 2018.

Committee chair Rep. Tina Sablan (D-Saipan) said they also want a briefing from the Office of Grants Management on the roll-out of a new rental and utility relief assistance program funded under the recently enacted Coronavirus Response and Relief Supplemental Appropriations Act.

The Governor's Office recently announced that the CNMI received $10.4 million for rental assistance and utility relief through the Emergency Rental Assistance Program.

Sablan said the committee will accept public comments at the meeting.

Invited to testify at the meeting are CNMI Medicaid Agency director Helen Sablan, NMHC corporate director Jesse Palacios, and Office of Grants Management director Epi Cabrera.

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Senate passes bill separating regulation of IPI casino gaming, hotel facilities

FERDIE DE LA TORRE
ferdie_delatorre@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

The Senate passed on first and final reading yesterday a bill that amends the law to separate the regulation of the casino gaming and the hotel facilities.

Saipan Tribune learned that during the session held on Tinian, Sens. Paul A. Manglona (Ind-Rota) and Edith E. DeLeon Guerrero voted "no" to Senate Bill 22-09. Sen. Teresita A. Santos (Ind-Rota) abstained.

Sen. Victor B. Hocog (R-Rota), who introduced the legislation, stated in the bill that the purpose is to clarify that the Commonwealth Casino Commission shall regulate the gaming facilities and activities of Imperial Pacific International (CNMI) LLC and not the hotel facilities and other non-gaming activities of IPI. This is one of IPI's requests Tuesday to the Legislature.

Under the bill, CCC shall not regulate the areas of a resort complex or other facility exclusively devoted to other activities, such as a hotel, golf course, and others in which no game is conducted or played an on wagering occurs.

Hocog

Hocog said CCC was established to regulate the gaming facilities and activities of IPI, not the construction and maintenance of the hotel facilities and other non-gaming activities.

He said the construction and maintenance of the hotel and other non-gaming facilities is currently regulated by federal and CNMI laws and regulations. He said this includes the Building Safety Code, Bureau of Environmental and Coastal Quality regulations, Commonwealth Utilities Corp. regulations, Department of Public Works, Department of Finance, Department of Labor, and Occupational Safety and Health Administration, and other applicable regulations.

The senator said CCC commissioners are not experts in hotel construction and occupancy laws and regulations.

IPI

From Page 1

help the CNMI government in these challenging times.

Among the changes it is seeking is to allow it to make a partial payment on its casino license fee last year and the remaining amount to be paid in five tranches, reducing the annual fee paid to the Commonwealth Casino Commission, authorizing online gaming, separating the hotel and the casino, and extending the deadline to finish its Imperial Pacific Saipan.

With the CNMI government needing $5.68 million to prevent 180 furloughed government employees from being terminated, Imperial Pacific is now seeking legislative action to allow it to pay $5.7 million of its $15.5 million casino license fee, which was due last August. As for the remaining $9.8 million, IPI wants to be allowed to pay this in five installments.

In a letter last Tuesday to Senate President Jude U. Hofschneider (R-Tinian) and House Speaker Edmund S. Villagomez (R-Saipan), IPI chief executive officer Ray N. Yumul said reducing this year's (2020-2021) casino license fee to $5.7 million and allowing IPI to pay a fraction of that ($5.7 million) will assist the government's need for funds.

Yumul asked that the remaining amount of $9,802,570 of the license fee be paid over a period of five equal annual installments beginning on year 2023.

He said IPI offers this beneficial solution by paying a portion of the $15,502,570 annual casino license fee while knowing that casino operations will not be possible for this period.

Yumul said that in informing the Legislature of a looming reduction-in-force plan, Gov. Ralph DLG Torres said the administration needs $5,688,239 to prevent 180 government employees who have been furloughed from being terminated.

"Perhaps many more may succumb if no new economic activity develops as the year progresses on," Yumul said.

He said IPI also requests for legislative action to reduce the $3-million annual regulatory fee that is due to the CCCC to an amount that is minimally required for the regulatory body to operate for the periods that IPI remains closed.

Yumul said IPI also believes that if allowed by the enactment of legislation to legalize online gaming—as was achieved in certain U.S. states such as New Jersey, Pennsylvania, and Michigan—IPI will be able to operate sooner and attract and invite players who prefer to stay-at-home to play.

He said IPI understands that there will be strict adherence to federal and CNMI laws that governs online gaming and money transactions to which IPI welcomes.

Yumul said IPI supports paying an additional annual fee for the license.

The CEO said IPI also asks the Legislature to pass legislation to allow it to separate the casino from the hotel. He said this will allow IPI to focus on gaming and for the Commonwealth Casino Commission to focus on regulating.

A longer version of this story is available at www. saipantribune.com

DOL

From Page 1

Claimants may apply for PUA either online or in person.

Individuals who can apply for PUA are U.S. nationals and qualified aliens who reside and work in the CNMI who have had a week(s) of full or partial unemployment on or after Dec. 27, 2020, through March 13, 2021, as a result of COVID-19. This includes CNMI-Only Transitional Workers.

Those on reduced hours or were furloughed may apply for PUA if they have documents to prove that their employment was interrupted due to "acceptable" COVID-19-related reasons.

Acceptable COVID-19 related reasons to qualify for PUA are:

■ The individual has been diagnosed with COVID-19 or is experiencing symptoms of COVID-19 and is seeking a medical diagnosis;

■ A member of the individual's household has been diagnosed with COVID-19;

■ The individual is providing care for a family member or a member of the individual's household who has been diagnosed with COVID-19;

■ A child or other person in the household for which the individual has primary caregiving responsibility and is unable to attend school or another facility that is closed as a direct result of the COVID-19 public health emergency and such school or facility care is required for the individual to work;

■ The individual is unable to reach the place of employment because of a quarantine imposed as a direct result of the COVID-19 public health emergency;

■ The individual is unable to reach the place of employment because the individual has been advised by a health care provider to self-quarantine due to concerns related to COVID-19;

■ The individual was scheduled to commence employment and does not have a job or is unable to reach the job as a direct result of the COVID-19 public health emergency;

■ The individual has become the breadwinner or major support for a household because the head of the household has died as a direct result of COVID-19;

■ The individual has to quit his or her job as a direct result of COVID-19;

■ The individual's place of employment is closed as a direct result of the COVID-19 public health emergency; or

■ The individual is self-employed (including an independent contractor or gig worker) and experienced a significant reduction of services because of the COVID-19 public health emergency.

To combat the effects of COVID-19, DOL will be strictly implementing a new application submission schedule from Feb. 16, 2021 to March 15, 2021.

On Monday, the department will only be accepting applications with last names starting from A to C. Tuesdays will be for last names D to H; Wednesdays will be for I to M; Thursdays will be for N to R; and Fridays will be for S to Z.

In consideration of the Feb. 16 opening date falling on a Tuesday, the department will also be accepting paper applications for last names beginning with "A" to "C" along with "D" to "H" only. In consideration of the application end date falling on a Saturday (March, 13, 2021), the department will accept paper application submissions on the Monday (March 15, 2021) following the deadline.

PROPST

From Page 1

That has prompted Propst, as chairman of the House of Representatives' Committee on Gaming, to call another public hearing to discuss this matter, among other issues.

IPI chief executive officer Ray N. Yumul said last night that the payment of $250 was in no way intended for the workers to give up any rights.

Yumul said their lawyer, Michael Dotts, clarified this with the U.S. Labor Department.

"I also personally do not agree that the funds were to be in exchange for them waiving their rights," he said.

The CEO said Hasan Gokce, the leader of the Turkish workers, asked for $250 per person to be given last Sunday night, or less than 12 hours before their flight to Turkey.

He said IPI had to use petty cash to pay the Turkish workers.

Yumul said an IPI representative wanted to have them acknowledge that they received the funds.

Yumul also disclosed that IPI also paid for transfer service, lodging, and COVID-19 testing at an additional cost of $13,000.

In a Facebook post, Propst also disclosed that they are being told that IPI is willing to pay $6 million toward the $15 million it owes in its annual casino licensing fee if lawmakers support a bill that will split or separate the casino from its hotel room obligations.

"IPI is in no position to be pulling strings again and calling the shots. Those days are over. None of us in the leadership can be bought, bribed, or bullied," he said.

It was learned that the Senate passed yesterday in a session on Rota Senate Bill 22-09, which separates the regulation of the casino gaming and the hotel facilities. Sen. Victor B. Hocog (R-Rota), who introduced the legislation.

Propst said that if IPI has $6 million to spare, it should use that to pay its workers what they are owed, pay its vendors, and stop trying to buy all the real estate on the island. "How much property have they bought thus far? Did they come to build a casino or to buy up property? Where are their priorities?" asked Propst.

On the $250 cash for travel money, Propst said the 16 Turkish workers who left the CNMI last Monday with a tiny fraction of what they are owed "got another kick in the gut from IPI."

He said as the Turkish workers were about to depart Saipan on a four-day trip back to Turkey, they were given $250 in cash for travel money "if, and only if, they would sign a document relinquishing IPI" from all future financial obligations, and that included money they are owed.

"How despicable and dirty," said the lawmaker, noting that IPI knows all too well those workers were under duress and desperate for travel money.

He said IPI knows the workers can barely speak English, let alone read a legal document, without a translator or attorney present.

Propst said this in essence was extortion.

"Either you sign this document or you don't get $250 of travel money. Was IPI obligated to give them $250? Perhaps not. But it would have been a kind gesture from a company that treated these and other workers like cattle," the lawmaker said.

Propst said he has informed Commonwealth Casino Commission executive director Andrew Yeom and the U.S. Department of Labor about this, and that he will be calling another meeting to discuss this and other pressing matters.

He said he wants to get to the truth about IPI, even if they have to move to an executive session.

"What is IPI's cash flow right now? Can it finish their initial gaming facility?" asked Propst, referring to ongoing construction of IPI's Imperial Palace Resort in Garapan.

He asked whatever happened to the Development Plan Advisory Committee and where is DPAC's report and if they can see its report. DPAC was created by the Casino License Agreement to allow the CNMI to monitor the implementation status of IPI's initial gaming facility and Phase 1 of the proposed Saipan Integrated Resorts.

In February 2020, then-CCC executive director Edward C. Deleon Guerrero stated that the issue of the Imperial Palace Resort building's structural integrity is an old story for CCC.

Deleon Guerrero said there was a rumor that the building is unsafe and leaning, and other things, but that they found out those are not true.

Deleon Guerrero said DPAC group no longer joins CCC.

GAS

From Page 1

According to a Mobil employee who requested anonymity, its normal this time of year for fuel prices to rise. It is even expected since everyone is returning to work.

"Everyone is returning to work since COVID-19 kind of gave us a break. It's no surprise anymore that gas prices are increasing again," she said.

Because there has been an increase in the average international fuel oil prices, the Commonwealth Utilities Corp. was informed that effective Feb. 1, this would affect the fuel adjustment charge.

As a result, the current FAC rate of $0.13585 per kWh will increase to $0.14704 per kWh effective Feb. 1, 2021. Residential customers who use 500 kWh of power per month will pay approximately $5.59 more in their monthly billing. ***(Kimberly A. Bautista)***

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TRIPLE J

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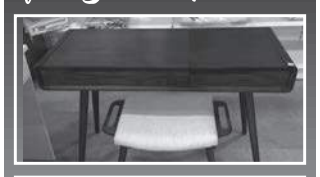

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Cost analysis OK'd for school execs' salary hike

Almost two weeks after the 17th State of Board of Education unanimously voted to restore 80 work hours for Public School Systems employees, teachers, and staff, the BOE approved yesterday the analysis of how much it would cost the system if the salaries of principals and vice principals are also adjusted.

Three of the four voting members that were present at the meeting approved the cost analysis for the salary adjustments, which brings PSS principals and vice principals a step closer to getting a salary increase, which has not happened since 25 years ago.

The three who approved the cost analysis were BOE members Greg Borja and Antonio L. Borja and BOE chair Andrew L. Orsini. BOE vice chair Herman Atalig excused himself from voting, citing a conflict of interest.

Saipan Tribune learned that PSS is looking at increasing the salaries of principals and vice principals using federal funds, although it was not clear as to which federal funds will the source of the increase.

According to a presentation from Lucretia B. Deleon Guerrero, who is director of the PSS Human Resources Office, the proposed increase for the salaries of principals and vice principals, tier 1,would boost salaries from $45,000 to $55,000 per annum, VP1 with four years of experience from $55,000 to $60,000, VP, tier 2, from $50,000 to $60,000, and VP2 with more than four years' experience, from $60,000 to $65,000.

Deleon Guerrero confirmed that PSS has a total of 20 principals and 18 vice principals—for a total of 38 individuals who will get an increase.

Deleon Guerrero said that all principals and vice principals will be paid using federal funds.

"…It is high time right now that we are able to provide an additional compensation…just a small bump to compensate them for overseeing the day-to-day operations during COVID-19 time and, not only that but they also oversee the day-to-day operation of online learning and blended learning," said Deleon Guerrero.

Orsini confirmed at the meeting that the implementation of the new salary adjustments for principals and vice principals will be effective Feb. 1.

BOE recently unanimously voted last Jan. 28 to restore the work hours of PSS employees, teachers, and staff who were making 64 hours back to 80 hours. ***(Justine Nauta)***

Bill seeks to authorize 2nd Saipan casino license

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REPORTER

Sens. Paul A. Manglona (Ind-Rota) and Edith E. DeLeon Guerrero (D-Saipan) introduced a bill yesterday that will authorize a second casino license in the event the Commonwealth Casino Commission revokes Imperial Pacific International (CNMI) LLC's exclusive Saipan casino license.

Manglona said he and DeLeon Guerrero filed the bill, Senate Bill 22-23, at yesterday's Senate session on Tinian.

In an email to *Saipan Tribune,* Manglona said the bill increases the number of Commonwealth casino license to two, thus eliminating the exclusivity provision, if CCC decides to revoke the present casino operator's license.

Manglona and DeLeon Guerrero said the legislation would authorize CCC to issue a second casino license in the event it revokes IPI's exclusive casino license

Under the bill, CCC may re-issue the revoked casino license to another operator under new terms and issue a second license to a new operator.

A few years after it began the construction of its initial gaming facility in Garapan, IPI is now faced with complaints about unpaid wages, labor abuses, substandard staff housing, and other problems with workers and the construction of its gaming facility. The completion date of the initial gaming facility was initially two years after IPI obtained the property. It was extended to August 2018 and extended again to February 2021.

The senators said it is more than probable that IPI will not be able to complete the construction of its initial gaming facility and overcome all of its financial and legal problems which may result in the revocation of its casino license.

"The number of casino license should be increased to two licenses to give another qualified operator the opportunity to establish a new casino [on] Saipan, stimulate the economy with new investments and employment for the CNMI workforce, and compete with the other casino operator to offer the best options and benefits to its patrons and the public," the senators said.

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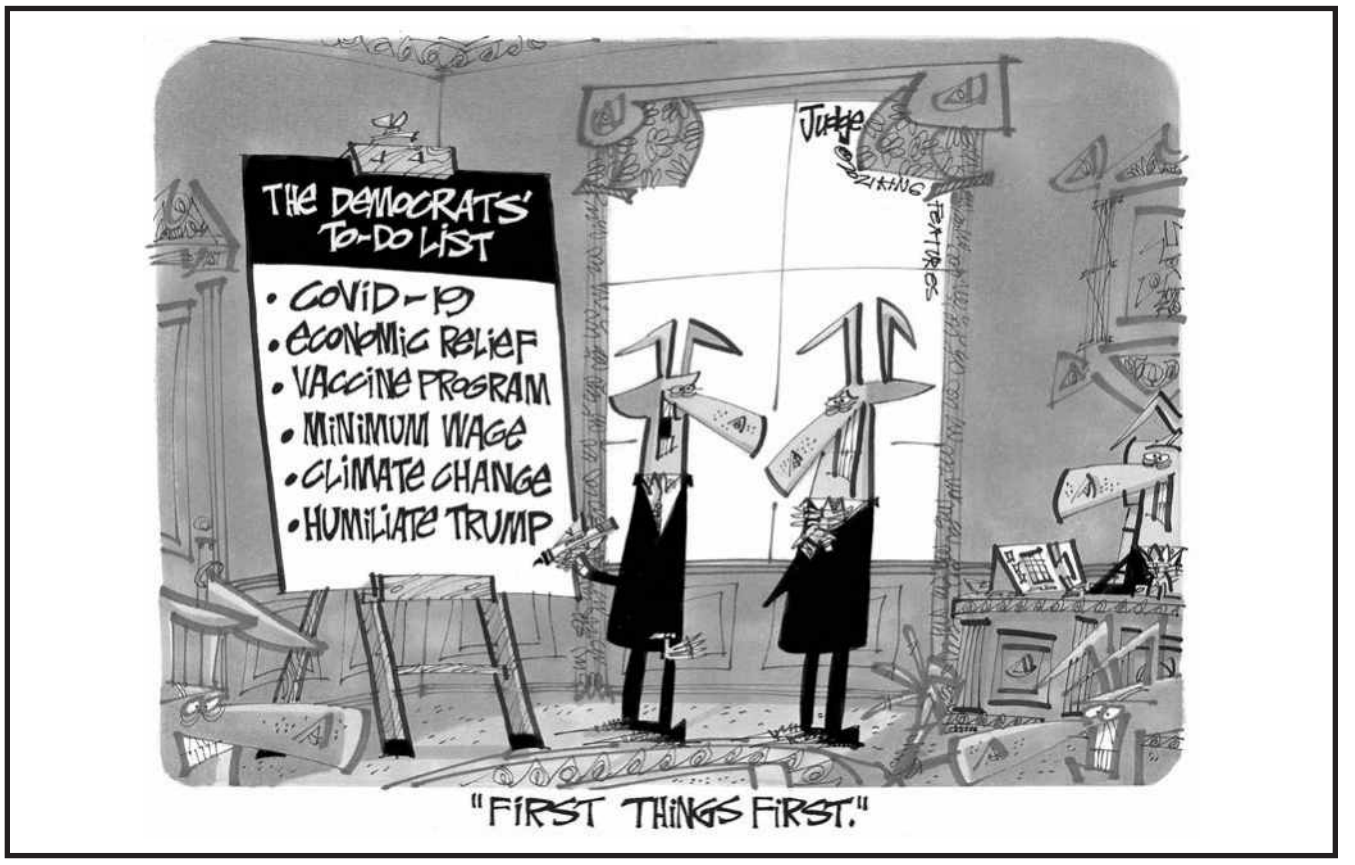

EDITORIAL

In impeachment trial, GOP senators face a reckoning, too

For Americans who caught Day 1 of the second impeachment trial of Donald Trump—a Tuesday afternoon devoted primarily to the fairly dry topic of constitutional standing—the result was shockingly one-sided. Not the outcome, of course (and more about that in a moment) but the argument. Not only did Maryland Rep. Jamie Raskin and his fellow House managers provide the far more compelling case for why the Senate should move forward with its impeachment trial, but the counterargument offered by Trump's lawyers was so meandering and weak that it seemed almost comical.

It was as if Trump's B-team defenders, hired as replacements just one week earlier, had not adequately prepared. Or perhaps thought on-the-spot improvising was sufficient. That Trump is reportedly upset with their presentation is thoroughly unsurprising. The more important question is: Does it even matter?

Ultimately, the Senate voted 56-44 to proceed with six Republicans joining the Democrats. This follows a previous test vote on the matter with one exception—Republican Bill Cassidy of Louisiana, who told reporters afterward that he was persuaded by the presentation from Raskin and his cohorts. In other words, Sen. Cassidy did his job as an impartial juror, finding the managers' argument more compelling while viewing the defense attorneys as "unfocused."

Anyone watching from home would have to chime in, "duh." Not since Adam was caught breaking a commandment in the Garden of Eden has a verdict seemed more obvious. And so the surprise was not that Sen. Cassidy saw the light, it's that 44 of his colleagues were so blinded to it. And that was merely on standing with a vote that was not determinative. Everyone knew Democrats were going to carry the day.

Here's another flash: Trump is not going to be found guilty. Whatever is said this week, it's obvious that there is no chance that enough GOP senators will join their Democratic colleagues to convict on a two-thirds vote even if the only tangible consequence involves Trump's eligibility to seek federal office in the future.

Trump's lock on the party has often been compared to a religious cult given the staunchness of his support even as his administration descended into madness in its final weeks. That doesn't make the impeachment trial any less necessary: Americans still deserve to see some reasonable effort made at accountability for the events leading up to the Jan. 6 assault on the U.S. Capitol. But it's the painful reality.

So here's what the trial has thus far made crystal clear: The former president is not the only person about to be judged at the conclusion of this proceeding. As Americans tune in to watch the evidence (much of it captured so memorably on video) and hear the arguments, they will form their own opinions. Not just about Trump, but about those senators who can see and hear the same things and yet care not a whit about them. Trump's lies about the election, his exhortation to his supporters to storm Congress and to overturn the results as

See GOP on Next Page

A repeat offender incited violence against Americans. He should be brought to justice for the Capitol attack

By DAHLEEN GLANTON
Chicago Tribune

Dahleen Glanton is a columnist for the Chicago Tribune.

Many of us did not look forward to the impeachment trial. We awaited it reluctantly, knowing that it would reopen old wounds and provide no relief.

In the weeks since the insurrection on Capitol Hill, we tried to lock the memories away. Some of us convinced ourselves that the riot we witnessed on television wasn't as bad as we once thought.

That's what victims often do after experiencing trauma.

They force themselves to put the past behind them to move on. They allow their eagerness to heal to overtake the reality of their pain. They act as normal as they can, as though no permanent damage was done.

They prefer to see themselves as survivors, as certainly they are.

Every so often, though, something jolts them back to reality. It triggers images that reignite emotions. And they feel victimized all over again.

On Tuesday, House impeachment managers opened their case for the conviction of the former president with a video of the Jan. 6 insurrection, reminding us of the brutal assault that rendered us helpless that day.

We saw the mob of angry men and women rambling through the Capitol in search of the vice president and the representatives we elected to represent us in Congress.

We saw them savagely scale the outside wall. We saw them break through windows with poles holding the American flag. We watched them brutally beat a police officer with hockey sticks and anything else they could find, even a pair of crutches.

We saw them squeeze another officer's head between two doors. We saw them charge through a doorway, chanting "heave-ho" as they forced their way through.

We saw the fury on their faces and heard the vile rage in their voices. We saw terrified lawmakers huddled on the floor hiding from potential killers outside the door. We saw a brave guard detouring assailants away from the chambers as the politicians were led to safety.

Some of us mourned again for all that we lost that day. We have never wavered in our belief that this perpetrator must be held accountable. Watching the insurrection again on Tuesday strengthened our resolve.

Others, however, continued to deny that the person who summoned the mob to Washington and sent them on this unpatriotic mission should bear any blame.

To argue that we are better off if we let bygones be bygones is like telling a victim that he or she is unworthy of retribution. To wrongly insist that it is too late to punish the man responsible is like telling a victim to just get over it and move on.

The former president's allies argued Tuesday that we, the people, have no right to bring charges against this agitator, that our motives are cruel and vindictive. They insist that we are overreacting, and that the trial is a farce designed to further weaken the political party that embraced him for four years and still refuses to let him go.

They insisted that we are not victims at all, that this repeat offender is the one who has been wronged. They suggested that we are bullies for seeking to stop him from ever being in a high position that would allow him to harm us again.

Perhaps his supporters don't feel like victims of a crime. But they are.

Often, those who don't realize they were victimized are the ones who are harmed the most. No matter whom Americans voted for as president or to which political party they belong, they were brutally attacked that day.

The insurrection was a crime against America and an assault on the democracy we represent. America is nothing without its people. Without us, it is just an ideology. We are the ones who bring it to life.

Whenever America is assaulted, we are the ones who suffer the damage.

The attack on the Capitol by a mob of domestic terrorists was as evil as the attacks on 9/11. It doesn't matter that the insurgents were our neighbors or people who waved our nation's flag as they forged the vicious strike.

The insurrectionists set out to destroy America as deliberately as the al-Qaida terrorists who flew a plane into the Twin Towers. And their anointed leader was as hell-bent on destroying our democracy as Osama bin Laden.

We will get through this trial, though we know justice will not be served in the end. We will find peace in knowing that many of our representatives in Washington recognized the magnitude of the crime committed against Americans and fought on our behalf.

Yes, Americans are survivors. Over time, our memory will fade and our anger will subside. But like every victim of a horrendous crime, we will never forget the assault.

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How a 13-minute impeachment video asserted the power of the authentic image

By MICHAEL PHILLIPS
Chicago Tribune

Michael Phillips is the Chicago Tribune *film critic.*

Every now and then, a piece of visual storytelling — be it propaganda, or impeachment trial evidence, or the most pious Jeep ad imaginable — reminds us what Roger Ebert wrote so simply and so well. "It's not what a film is about," he reflected. "It's how it is about it."

The film of the moment is a historical tragedy running 13 minutes. On Tuesday, the historic second impeachment trial of former President Donald Trump opened with a mini-documentary chronicling the notorious and ultimately lethal events of Jan. 6 inside and outside the U.S. Capitol.

The images come rushing back. Trump speaks from behind his Plexiglas wall, stating his wishes that we, his people, must "stop the steal." His words, on the prompter, are just this side of bald incitement to riot, and just slippery enough to avoid turning his many Republican allies against him around impeachment time.

Trump then goads his supporters to do what needs to be done in the wake of a plainly fraudulent election. (That part lacks truth, but delusional millions can dream.) In the impeachment video, footage of some protesters in attendance that day, hoisting Trump signs and American flags and wailing for politicians' blood, shows a mob subset peeling off and confronting police protecting the Capitol.

Meantime the certification of the election results continues inside the Capitol. Like the baptism scene in "The Godfather," we're back and forth, back and forth, in a gripping example of cross-cutting or "parallel editing." The violence reaches a crescendo. The film's factual, calmly dread-inducing intertitles provide the tick-tock of events. Using part of a now-infamous testimonial tribute, Trump, having taped a video of his own after the Jan. 6 carnage, tells the mob that he "loves" them but they should go home now "in peace."

The impeachment video ends with Trump's tweet, also from Jan. 6, saying we brought this on ourselves. He is unrepentant and, unlike on Nov. 6, 2020, victorious.

It's stunningly effective visual evidence, assembled by pros. Much of the footage was taken, by observers of and participants in the Capitol assault, in a spirit of triumph. On Tuesday, the triumph turned to the taste of ashes.

Even Trump's defense team, headed by the hapless Bruce L. Castor, Jr. admired it Tuesday. "I'll be quite frank with you," he said, before launching into the dullest legal filibuster since Kevin Costner's courtroom monologue in "JFK." We "changed what we were going to do," because that 13-minute blast of evidence, culled from various cellphone cameras and news sources, was "well done."

Watching it meant falling under the spell of filmmakers who knew what they were doing. It could've gone wrong so many ways. Add a melodramatic musical score, and you've gone too far. Mess around with the chronology of events for the sake of a more streamlined narrative, also known as "pulling a Michael Moore," and suddenly you're giving your political adversaries all the ammo they need for a motion to dismiss.

As for what got left out of the video … well, it was enough for Newsmax, among other far-right networks who derided the 13-minute film Tuesday night.

On Newsmax, commentator Rob Schmitt of "Rob Schmitt Tonight" teed up a segment titled "MISLEADING AMERICA," all-caps. By leaving out Trump's sentence exhorting the protesters to "peacefully and patriotically make your voices heard," Schmitt argued, the Democrats stacked the deck with their "selective editing."

Agree or not, we must all agree that all editing of anything is selective. Editing techniques can excite, disturb, lull, set a rhythm consciously or even subconsciously, connect ideas and images in different ways.

We saw that clearly enough with a video shown on Jan. 6, just after Rudy Giuliani pumped up the Trump supporters at the "Save America" rally with talk of "trial by combat."

At the D.C. Ellipse Park rally that day, a two-minute, free-association propaganda video filled the park's outdoor screens. America's evils came fast and furiously, in quick snippets: a homeless freeway encampment. A Jew (Chuck Schumer). Hollywood (liberals, Jews, not enough Trump fans). Trump gazing at rockets in flight. Aircraft carriers on a mission. Joe Biden, mouth agape, just asking for a coup.

It was no less disturbing, and insidious in its implications and menacing aura of conspiracy, than the assassination bureau training video in "The Parallax View."

If you've never seen director Alan J. Pakula's 1974 thriller, there's a beautiful new edition out on the Criterion Collection label. A journalist (Warren Beatty) has gone undercover to nail whoever's behind a string of mysterious political killings. He has gained access to the inner sanctum of the Parallax Corporation.

Seated alone in a private screening room, he sees what we see: a mind-control propaganda film, peppered with trigger words. Love. Mother. Country. Home. Father. Nervously paced, ever-accelerating images tell a story of blurred boundaries and pathology. A steak, rare, in close-up. Piles of coins. The White House. A nude woman in a tub. A Klan rally. Violence as righteousness. Do you have the stuff what it takes to work for the Parallax Corporation?

As Trump's rally video concluded with looming, scowling tight shots of himself, the effect was something like Big Brother from Orwell's "1984" in a mashup with "The Parallax View."

It seems like a year ago, but last Sunday Bruce Springsteen starred in another kind of two-minute propaganda film, this one a car ad disguised as a holy act of healing.

"The middle has been a hard place to get to lately," we were told. But there's "a chapel in Kansas," in the dead center of the 48 states, and as the kazillionaire behind the wheel of his old Jeep steps out of the vehicle, in cowboy boots, words and images of what many believe to be the one true America — grain silos, freight trains, lonesome highways, squinty men searching for "common ground" — roll along, as a quiet guitar tells us this, friends, is where we need to be.

This was an ad designed to bridge the right and the left, its determinedly centrist appeal designed to sell you a Jeep and a handful of the hallowed, elusive middle ground America has lost. I wanted to like it; it seems sincere. But all I could think of watching it was how it felt like a ripoff and a quiet perversion of Springsteen's 1982 masterwork of a solo album, "Nebraska." That's an album of dark skies and societal castoffs, and of America's recent past, much of its atmosphere (and its title song), according to Springsteen himself, inspired by Terrence Malick's 1973 "Badlands."

You wouldn't sell a lot of Jeeps with "Nebraska." But as a vignette of Americana and American salesmanship, I wonder if the middling middle approach to forgiving and forgetting and moving on will sell many Jeeps, either. The imagery contained no overt politics (though the voiceover acknowledged all our problems). I wouldn't even call Trump's two-minute, pump-it-up propaganda video political, either. It's lower than that.

Filmmakers, whatever they're selling, continually attempt to "transcend" politics, because it's easier to get the people to do your bidding that way. It's what Leni Reifenstahl said about a certain leader back in 1935, when she was making "The Triumph of the Will." Hitler "wanted a film," she later wrote, "which would move, appeal to, impress an audience which was not necessarily interested in politics." Watching the 13-minute impeachment video, sobering and undeniable in its impact, politics doesn't seem to be the point. The point — the "how" of it, as Ebert said — is what happens when people are sold a faulty idea of rightful ownership. And then they act on it, in part because the movie they just saw told them to.

Sashimi and Me

LITERARY NOOK

By BOB COLDEEN
Special to the Saipan Tribune

Bob Coldeen is a longtime TV journalist in the CNMI and is news director/reporter of KSPN 2.

Ask of any food, "What is your greatest wish?"
I say, "Yellow-fin sashimi is my go-to dish."
When my belly aches for something delish,
I always look for that special tuna fish.

They call tuna, "Chicken of the Sea" understand?
Sure, but no one calls chicken, "Tuna of the Land."
True, golden brown thighs entice my appetite.
On my plate, they are a most welcome sight.

But what counts is how it comes to be my meal.
To my way of thinking, we got to keep it real.
Frozen chicken parts taken out of an ice-box?
Or freshly caught fish straight from the docks?

Squeeze luscious lime on fine firm red meat.
Add soy sauce and you're almost complete.
Drop in little red hot peppers, hell yes!
Sprinkle in green onions, be my guest.

Watching this magical mix, I sit in ecstasy
Staring at the sashimi right in front of me
Just long enough for the chemicals to work.
Then I bite and my taste buds go berserk.

GOP

From Page 8

they were being recorded, the frightening insurrection that left five dead and injured many more, they combine to form a compelling narrative of incitement to insurrection if not outright treason. To hear all this played out again—sitting with so many who experienced this horror firsthand—and yet to be completely inured to what happened is almost unfathomable.

What are Americans to make of this? Simply standard partisanship? Another day at the office in the halls of Congress? Sorry, but that just doesn't wash. Trump did not engage in the standard political bloviation. The attack was not just another wayward demonstration. Not when overturning the federal government was at its heart.

The nation has already decided that it needs a new president. That was resolved in November. What it is witnessing this week is evidence that it also needs a new Republican Party. One with members who put country, honor and duty first and not their allegiance to a con man willing to toss all democratic norms when they do not serve his purpose.

Impeachment is not about putting on trial the 74 million or so people who voted for Donald Trump. But it is about holding accountable the former president for the actions he took that culminated with the Capitol attack. And it is just as much about considering the fitness of GOP senators who would so easily excuse his culpability and abandon their own oath of office to "support and defend the Constitution of the United States against all enemies, foreign and domestic."

Voters should take careful note of their senators' actions and inactions at this historic moment and pass judgment accordingly, albeit peacefully, at the ballot box. It may be the only place where justice can eventually, assuredly, appropriately, be done.

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YEAR OF THE OX

Kung Hei Fat Choi

A SAIPAN TRIBUNE
SPECIAL ADVERTISING FEATURE

Ushering in the Year of the Ox

By MAGGIE HIUFU WONG
CNN

Though parties and travel may be discouraged in much of the world right now as COVID-19 casts a shadow over Lunar New Year for the second year in a row, that doesn't mean there aren't ways we can still mark the occasion.

Lunar New Year falls on Feb. 12 this year as we bid farewell to the Year of the Rat and usher in the Year of the Ox.

Here's a quick guide to the 15-day Lunar New Year/ Spring Festival celebration and all it entails.

Year of the Metal Ox

While you may have heard of the 12-year Chinese zodiac calendar, represented by 12 different animals, it's actually far more complicated.

A year isn't just categorized by its zodiac animal. There's also a complex sexagenary cycle—a combination of one of 10 heavenly stems and one of 12 earthly branches.

For example, Feb. 12 marks the beginning of the xin chou year, according to the sexagenary cycle. «Xin» represents the heavenly stem for the element metal, while «chou» is the earthly branch symbol for ox, making it the Year of the Metal Ox.

We asked Thierry Chow, a Hong Kong-based feng shui master, to share her thoughts on what this means for the year ahead.

"The year of xin chou will have a strong emphasis on the yin metal element," she says. "The metal element represents anything sparkly from jewelry to the needle of a syringe. So we can see a bigger emphasis on industries related to metal in 2021.

"The ox, in Chinese culture, is a hardworking zodiac sign. It usually signifies movements so, hopefully, the world will be less static than last year and get moving again in the second half of the year."

Many people take the 60-year calendar very seriously and believe each person's own birth sign will be affected differently by the year's heavenly stems and earthly branches. So the calendar plays an important role in making huge life decisions for the year ahead, such as whether they should get married or start a business.

Followers believe that for each of the Chinese zodiac signs, luck will depend largely on the positions of the Tai Sui—the stars directly opposite Jupiter.

If your zodiac sign clashes with Tai Sui—aka the Grand Duke of Jupiter—in a particular year, you might find yourself dealing with disruptions.

"People born in the Year of the Ox will be facing their 'Ben Ming Nian'—your own zodiac year," says Chow. "So there will be more changes and instability in general."

A few other zodiac signs will also be clashing with Tai Su in various ways, she adds. Dragons may deal with challenging friendships, while people born in the Horse and Dog years may deal with more gossip and unexpected matters.

People born in the Year of the Goat will be facing Tai Sui (Ying Tai Sui) this year, "meaning there must be a massive change ahead of them," says Chow.

That said, followers believe there are ways to improve your luck.

"Some people will resolve their clashes with Tai Sui by taking part in celebrations, like getting married or going to positive events more," says Chow.

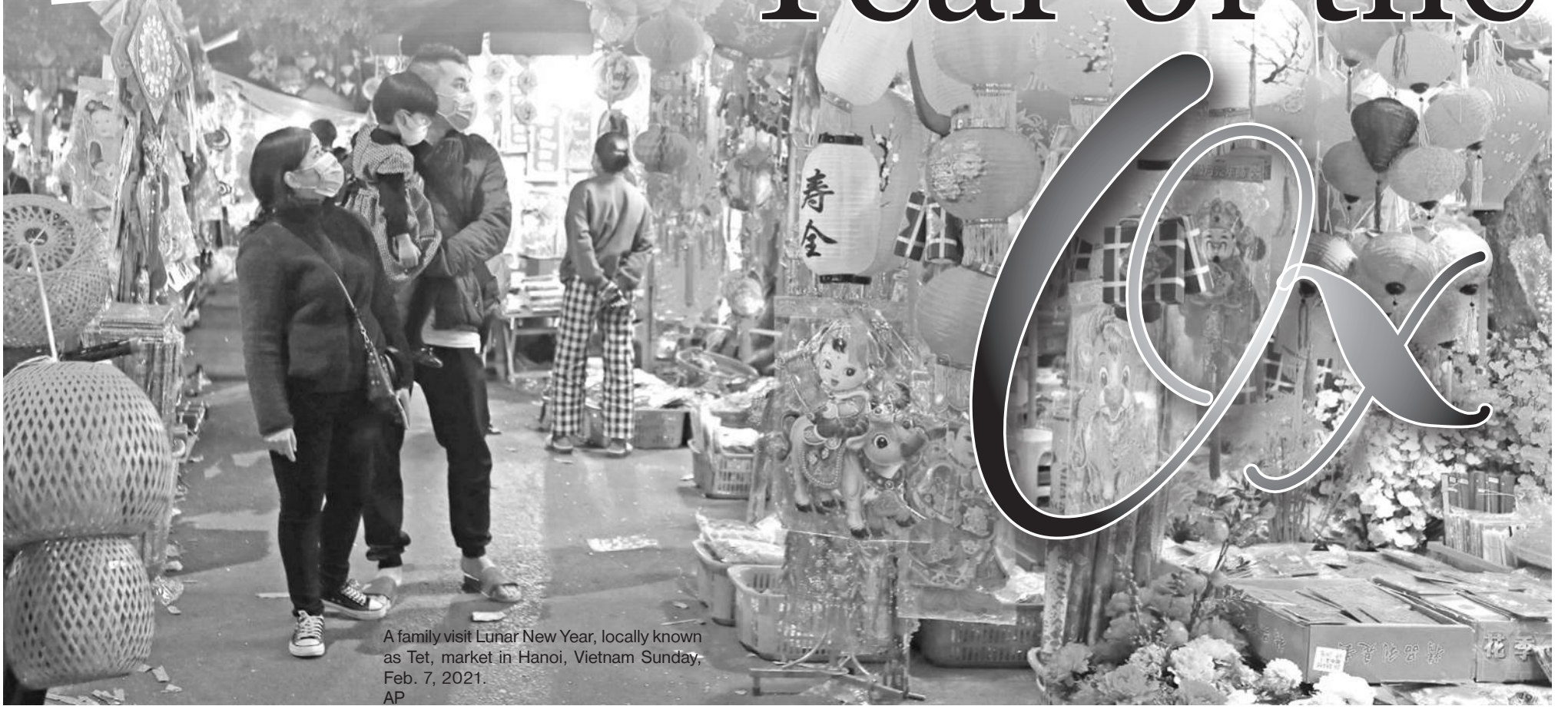
But the feng shui master is quick to remind us that this is only a general overview of what the year means for each zodiac animal. In Chinese geomancy, each person's birthday chart is composed of a wide range of elements such as the day and time of their birth, meaning they may interact

See OX on Next Page

AP
A baby panda climbs on a display for the upcoming Lunar New Year of the Ox at the China Conservation and Research Center for the Giant Panda at the Wolong Nature Reserve in southwestern China's Sichuan province, Wednesday, Feb. 3, 2021.

AP
A seller rests her eyes while waiting for customers at a Lunar New Year, locally known as Tet, market in Hanoi, Vietnam Sunday, Feb. 7, 2021.

AP
Chinese god statues is cleaned in preparation for the upcoming Lunar New Year celebration at a temple in Tangerang, Indonesia, Saturday, Feb. 6, 2021.



A family visit Lunar New Year, locally known as Tet, market in Hanoi, Vietnam Sunday, Feb. 7, 2021.
AP

OX

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with the year a bit differently.

Preparations during COVID-19

The pandemic has forced many to change the way they celebrate Lunar New Year.

In China, many preparations and celebrations are expected to be done virtually as the government has asked its citizens not to travel home to prevent the spread of Covid-19.

In response, some tourist sites are offering free entry for those forced to spend the holiday away from their families. Meanwhile, companies have launched tools for people to have a "cloud lunar new year," providing everything from virtual markets to conference tools for online reunion dinners.

But no matter how one celebrates, there's a lot of preparation involved if you want to follow the Lunar New Year rule book.

It all begins about a week ahead of the new year.

On the 26th day of the last lunar month—Feb. 7 this year—festive cakes and puddings were made. The word for cakes and puddings is "gao" in Mandarin or "go" in Cantonese, which sounds the same as tall, meaning improvements and growth for the next year.

The big cleansing is done on the 28th day, which was Feb. 9 this year.

Lunar New Year fortune banners were hung on the 29th day, Feb. 10.

Normally, Lunar New Year fairs will be set up during the last days of the lunar year, most selling trinkets and flowers for the new year. But because of the pandemic, many cities have downsized or canceled their festivities.

The year usually wraps up with a big family reunion dinner on Lunar New Year's Eve, which fell on Feb. 11 this year.

The menu is carefully chosen to include dishes associated with luck, including fish (the Chinese word for it sounds like the word for "surplus"), puddings (symbolizes advancement) and foods that look like gold ingots (like dumplings).

After the feast, families will stay up past midnight to welcome in the new year.

Entire festival lasts 15 days

Though many Western nations refer to the Lunar New Year/Spring Festival holiday as Chinese New Year, bear in mind it's celebrated not just in Chinese communities all over the world but other Asian nations such as Vietnam and South Korea.

Countries that observe Lunar New Year often offer three to seven days of public holidays but celebrations aren't complete until the 15th day of the first lunar month, also known as the Lantern Festival. (Lunar New Year in 2021 lasts from February 12 to February 26.)

Families tend to have different sets of rules and traditions, but most will bless each other with auspicious words like "san tai gin hong" or "shen ti jian kang" (wish you good health).

During normal times, when people aren't in lockdown, they're expected to visit relatives and friends during the festival—except for the third day of the month. Day three of Lunar New Year (which falls on Valentine's Day this year) is named chi kou, or red mouth. It is believed that arguments are more likely to happen on this day so people will visit temples and avoid social interactions.

There are plenty of other rules and superstitions attached to the Lunar New Year. For instance, don't wash or cut your hair on the first day of the new year. The Chinese character for hair is the first character in the word for prosper. Therefore washing or cutting it off is seen as washing your fortune away.

You'll also want to avoid purchasing footwear for the entire lunar month, as the term for shoes (haai) sounds like losing and sighing in Cantonese.

Do, however, wear red. It's associated with luck and prosperity.

Throughout the festival, hosts will prepare candy boxes and snacks for their guests. Married couples are expected to hand out red packets filled with money to children and unmarried adults to wish them luck.

The seventh day (Feb. 18) is said to be the day when the Chinese mother goddess Nuwa created mankind and, thus, is called renri (the people's birthday).

Different communities in Asia will serve different birthday foods on that day. For instance, people in Malaysia enjoy yeesang, or a "Prosperity Toss" of raw fish and shredded vegetables whereas Cantonese people will eat sweet rice balls.

The highlight comes on the last day (Feb. 26). In ancient Chinese society, it was the only day when young girls could go out to admire lanterns and meet boys. Thus, it's also been dubbed Chinese Valentine's Day.

Nowadays, cities around the world still put on massive lantern displays and fairs on the final day of the festival.

Some create more sparks than others. In China, the small town of Nuanquan puts on a spectacular "fireworks" show by throwing molten metal against a cold stone city wall.

Wishing you a burst of joy and prosperity!
McDonald's wishes everyone Gong Xi Fa Cai in the Year of the Ox.
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Lunar New Year starts today amid concerns

Lunar New Year 2021—the Year of the Ox—begins on Feb. 12 in Asia (Feb. 11 in the west). China hopes to discourage travel for Lunar New Year this year, due to the coronavirus pandemic. This holiday traditionally sparks what's been called "the world's largest annual human migration."

Today starts the Lunar New Year 2021—the Year of the Ox.
CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

The New York Times reported on Jan. 28, 2021, that, in order to avoid an outbreak in the ongoing coronavirus pandemic, China has now increased restrictions, offered incentives and appealed to a sense of filial and national responsibility in an effort to prevent about 300 million migrant workers from going home for the Lunar New Year holiday. China's public holiday for Lunar New Year in 2021 will be Feb. 12-17.

Lunar New Year is the most important of Chinese holidays. Over a billion people in China and millions around the world celebrate it. The holiday coincides with the date of new moon in Asia, which falls this year on Feb. 12 (the exact time is Feb. 11, 2021, at 19:08 UTC. Countries in Asia celebrating Lunar New Year include China, Thailand, Indonesia, Malaysia and the Philippines. It's also celebrated

Continued on Next Page

People wear face masks to help curb the spread of the coronavirus as they shop for the upcoming Chinese New Year celebrations at the Dihua Street market in Taipei, Taiwan, Wednesday, Feb 10, 2021.
AP

From Page 14

in Chinatowns and Asian homes around the world. It's considered a time to honor deities and ancestors and to be with family. The event typically sparks a rush of travel that *The New York Times* has called the world's largest annual human migration.

Each year is associated with one of 12 animals in the Chinese zodiac. 2021 is the Year of the Ox.

Festivities in 2021 begin on Feb. 12 and continue for 15 days, culminating with the Lantern Festival.

The calendar and Lunar New Year

In China, the familiar Gregorian calendar is used for day-to-day life. But Chinese calendar dates continue to be used to mark traditional holidays such as the new year and the fall moon festival. It's also used astrologically to select favorable dates for weddings and other special events.

The Chinese calendar is a *lunisolar* calendar, in other words a combination of solar and lunar calendars. It has a long history spanning several Chinese dynastic periods from as far back as the Shang Dynasty around the 14th century B.C. There are several different symbolic cycles within the calendar, used in Chinese astrology, that make it an intricate and complex measure of time.

A month in the Chinese calendar spans a single lunar cycle. The first day of the month begins during the new moon, when no sunlight falls on the lunar hemisphere that faces the Earth. A lunar cycle, on average, lasts 29.5 days, so a lunar month can last 29 or 30 days. Usually, there are 12 lunar months in a Chinese calendar year. In order to catch up with the solar calendar, which averages 365.25 days in a year, an extra month is added to the Chinese calendar every two or three years. As a result, Lunar New Year falls on different dates each year (in the Gregorian calendar) between Jan. 21 and Feb. 21.

2021 is the Year of the Ox

Each year of the Chinese lunar calendar is represented by one of 12 animal symbols of the Chinese zodiac: Rat, Ox, Tiger, Rabbit, Dragon, Snake, Horse, Sheep (Goat), Monkey, Rooster, Dog, and Boar (Pig). For 2021, it's the Ox's turn. Travelchinaguide.com says of the Year of the Ox: "Oxen used to be capable farming tools in an agricultural society, which attach to the symbol of diligence, persistence, and honesty. In Chinese culture, Ox is a faithful friend that made great contributions to the development of the society. Like the ox, people born in the Year of the Ox are industrious, cautious, hold their faith firmly, and always glad to offer help."

How to celebrate

From the first day of the Lunar New Year (the day of the new moon) to the 15th day (next full moon), Lunar New Year celebrations abound. Each day holds a special significance that varies according to local traditions. But first, before the arrival of the new year, homes are thoroughly cleaned to sweep away ill fortune and to welcome good luck. On New Year's Eve, families traditionally gather to celebrate and enjoy sumptuous traditional feasts, and to greet the new year with fireworks at midnight.

Continued on Next Page

From Page 15

In the days that follow, festive dance parades are usually held featuring colorful dragons or lions, ceremonies are held to pay homage to deities and ancestors, children receive money in red envelopes, gifts are exchanged, extended family members visit each other, and there's more traditional feasting. But, as *The New York Times* pointed out on Jan. 28, 2021, those family celebrations are being discouraged this year, due to the coronavirus.

The Lunar New Year celebration traditionally culminates on the 15th day with the Lantern Festival. On this night of the full moon, in most years other than this one, families mingle in the streets carrying lighted lanterns, often creating a beautiful light display.

Folklore and Lunar New Year

There are several variations on the mythology behind Lunar New Year celebrations. Most are based on the story of an ugly, bloodthirsty monster named Nian that would emerge on the last night of each year to destroy villages and eat people. A wise elder advised villagers to scare the monster away with loud noises. That night, they set fire to bamboo, lit fireworks, and banged their drums. The monster, afraid of the loud noises and lights, ran away to hide in its cave. In another version of the myth, an old man persuaded Nian to turn its wrath on other monsters, not the villagers. Before he was seen riding away on Nian, the old man, actually a god, advised the people to hang red paper decorations in their homes and set off firecrackers on the last night of the year to keep Nian away.

On the first day of the new year, the villagers celebrated, greeting each other with the words *Guo Nian*, which mean "survive the Nian." That tradition that has continued to this day, with *Guo Nian* now meaning "celebrate the new year."

Perhaps in 2021, a new way of greeting and celebrating will emerge.

Bottom line: The Lunar New Year corresponds with the new moon, which falls on Feb. 11, 2021, at 19:08 UTC. New moon is Feb. 12 in Asia (Feb. 11 in the west). Each Lunar New Year is associated with one of 12 animals in the Chinese zodiac. For 2021, it's the Year of the Ox. This year, travel is discouraged because of the coronavirus. ***(earthsky.org)***

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YEAR OF THE OX

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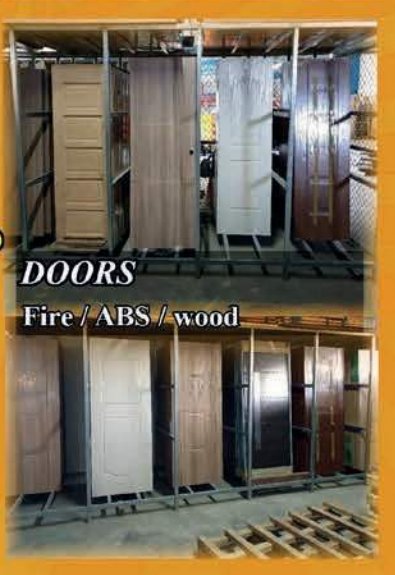

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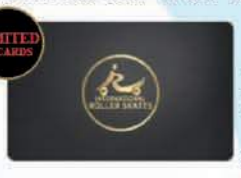

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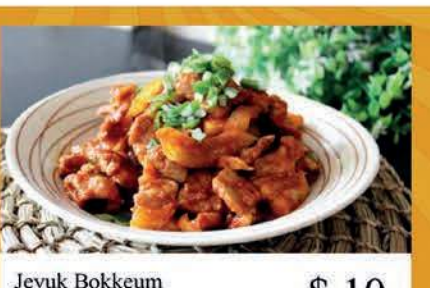

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FROM: P&A CORPORATION

Dragon dance ban saddens Manila residents

By AARON FAVILA
ASSOCIATED PRESS

Robert Sicat sprays a protective coating on a dragon head at Manila's Chinatown, Binondo Philippines on Feb. 4, 2021. AP

MANILA, Philippines (AP)—Raucous dragon dance shows have been banned in Manila's Chinatown due to the pandemic, casting aside a crowd-drawing Lunar New Year tradition many believe helps drive misfortunes away.

The Philippine government's ban on large public gatherings and street parties to fight the coronavirus dealt a big blow to hundreds of dragon dancers and production crews who are struggling to find other sources of income.

"There would have been large crowds wanting to drive away the misery and bad luck, but our street dance shows were prohibited this year," said Therry Sicat, a Filipino slum-dweller who with his siblings manages one of several dragon dance troupes in Chinatown.

"If we had 100% fun in the past, I only feel 30% of that this time around. It's really depressing," said the 31-year-old, whose wife is pregnant with their fourth child.

The absence of the dragon dances is a palpable sign for many Manila residents that the pandemic crisis that shut down much of Manila's economy and locked down millions of Filipinos in their homes is spilling over well into this year. But Sicat, his siblings and their families are fighting to keep the Chinese tradition—and their livelihood—alive.

A member of a Dragon and Lion dance repair a lion's head as the group seeks other ways to earn a living in Manila's Chinatown, Binondo, Philippines on Feb. 3, 2021. AP

After the dragon dances were banned by Manila's mayor, Sicat and his family used their Styrofoam, paint and other dragon costume-making materials to craft decorative miniature Chinese-style lion heads instead. The colorful items have become a hit online and fill their small creek-side home with hope and joy. About 200 have been sold so far, priced at 1,500 pesos ($30) each, he said.

Other members of his dragon dance troupe, which employs about 50 dancers, have set up online food businesses or are working as motorcycle food deliverymen to make ends meet, Sicat said.

A miniature lion head is carried as it is prepared to be painted in Manila's Chinatown, Binondo Philippines on Feb. 3, 2021. AP

Sicat's profits from the decorative lion heads are just a fraction of the income generated by their dragon dance shows in the past. During the busy Lunar New Year season in past years, a Chinatown business establishment would pay 35,000 pesos ($720) for a session of dragon and lion dancing accompanied by drummers and merrymakers for good luck.

Sicat still brims with optimism despite the dire economic times in one of the countries hardest hit by the pandemic in Southeast Asia. He said he looks forward to the return of the hope-inspiring dragon dances and to hearing the drums again.

"There's no Chinese New Year, but we are all healthy. We can survive this pandemic," Sicat said.

The Philippines has reported more than 540,000 COVID-19 cases, the second highest number in Southeast Asia after Indonesia, and 11,296 deaths. It is negotiating with seven Western and Asian pharmaceutical companies to obtain COVID-19 vaccines, with the first batches expected to arrive next week.

About 70 million Filipinos are to be vaccinated with the hope that it will help Manila's devastated economy bounce back.

Miniature lion heads are prepared for delivery in Manila's Chinatown, Binondo, Philippines on Feb. 8, 2021. AP

Business

PSG Professional Corp. celebrates 17 years of service

By BEA CABRERA
beacabrerasaipan@gmail.com
CORRESPONDENT

PSG Professional Corp., located along Beach Road, San Jose across The Shack, was established on Feb. 11, 2004 and initially started as a bookkeeping, tax preparation, and documents handling service company. According to PSGPC president Jess Pantaleon, due to their clients' needs, they have grown with the times, always evolving and added more services including insurance brokerage, real estate appraisal, digital printing, notary services, and a men's and women's salon.

"We have stayed in business for 17 years because of the trust that our clients and our business partners put in us and you can say that PSGPC is like a one-stop shop. We try to cater to our clients' business and individual needs as much as we can like when a client comes to our office for notary of a vehicle bill of sale, after the notary service we offer them insurance coverage because we are an insurance broker and most of the time they also ask us to do the registration of their vehicle," he said.

"When they come back the next day, they have insurance coverage and the new registration. It saves them time and they do not have to skip work. We also handle the insurance coverage, documents handling, tax preparation, and employee work permits processing of all our bookkeeping clients," he added.

When it comes to clients, PSGPC does not cherry pick as they are in the business of protecting individuals, business entities, and corporations from risk of financial losses. "We provide service to everyone in need of our service whether it is a small or big companies, individuals or startups… Because of the nature of our business, we have a diverse clientele such as food catering businesses, private schools, construction companies, retail and wholesale stores, dive shops, automobile repair companies, air-conditioning business, restaurants, beauty salon, bed-and-breakfast, non-profit organization, shipping companies, consulting, carwash, building rentals, and other business industries," Pantaleon said.

"To us our clients are not just business they our friends and part of our PSG family. We take care of their business as if it is our own and almost 70% of our clients have been with us for more than 10 years and some have been with us for 17 years. Our new clients are mostly referrals from our existing clients," Pantaleon added.

With regards to credibility and dependability, PSGPC has experienced staff that provides service depending on the client needs. "They have more than 15 years of experience in the field of accounting, tax preparation, insurance, business operations, and real estate appraisal. We also have staff in the field of beauty care which provides excellent services from head to toe.

"Every time a client walks into our office we want them to feel welcomed and when they walk out of our office, we want them to feel joy and peace knowing that whatever it was they needed when they walked in, our company was able to help them accomplish it," Pantaleon said.

He added, "We would like to thank all our clients for trusting us through the years as we would not have made it this far without their support. We know that everyone is having a hard time right now. Let us just support each other, we will get through this pandemic. We would also like to thank our business partners—Marianas Insurance, Traders Insurance, and Pacifica Insurance—for their support and for partnering with us as insurers and to our future clients."

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO
PSG Professional Corp. management and staff led by president Jess Pantaleon (floral shirt).

PSG Professional Corp. is located at the 1st Floor of CDA Building Room 109, Beach Road, San Jose, Saipan. They are open from Mondays to Friday, 9am-5pm. For more information, call 235-5901 and 235-5902 or follow their Facebook page: PSG Professional Corporation.

Mendiola-Long recognized by CNMI SBA

By BEA CABRERA
beacabrerasaipan@gmail.com
CORRESPONDENT

Long-time businessman Philip Mendiola-Long won the Small Business Administration Regional Award from the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands called "The U.S. Small Business Administration 2020 Phoenix Award Nominee-Volunteer" at the Saipan Chamber of Commerce general membership meeting held last week at the grand ballroom of the Hyatt Regency Saipan in Garapan.

Mendiola-Long

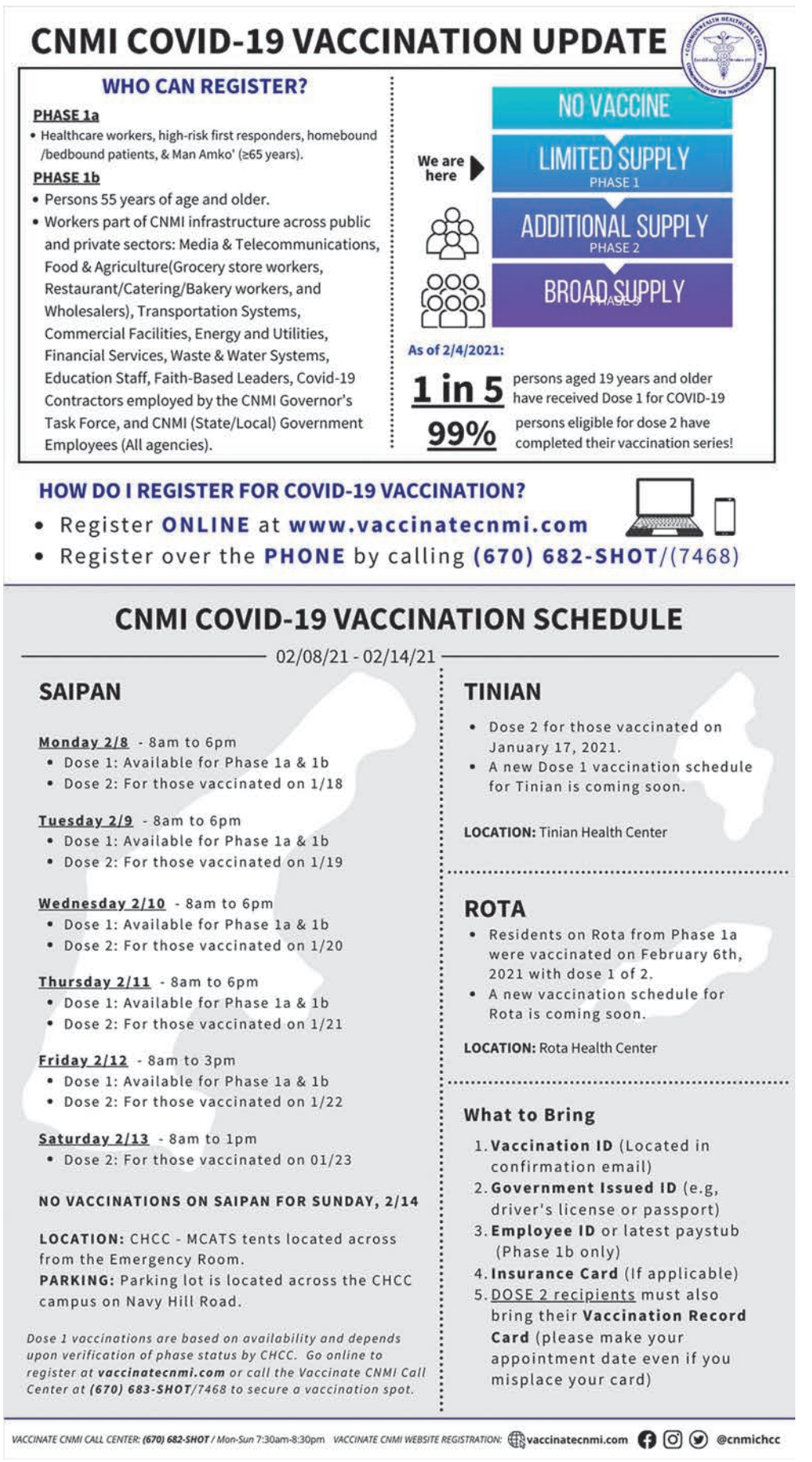
The award was given by CNMI Small Business Development Center director Nicole Babauta and according to her, Mendiola-Long is the first recipient of this award for his exceptional volunteer work in helping the community of Tinian recover by tirelessly leading fundraisers and facilitating relief operations and donations after the devastation that Super Typhoon Yutu brought.

Babauta highlighted all of Mendiola-Long's work with which the award was based. Mendiola-Long was one of the first people on Tinian to take initiative after Typhoon Mangkhut and Super Typhoon Yutu. He faced complete losses at his fuel station and catastrophic damage to his home and office. After losing both his gasoline pumps to the storm, he immediately used hand pumps and a long, metal tube to pull gasoline from his in-ground tanks in order to supply emergency and military vehicles," she said.

"He then reached out to his friends, family, and business partners to facilitate a relief drive and served as the main contact for logistics, distribution, and management for Samaritan's Purse's international aid to the island. In fact, he used his own office for the distribution center, used his own vehicles for the pickup and delivery of goods, enlisted his own family and friends to perform the labor... Philip used social media to solicit from the U.S. mainland, Hawaii, and Guam when he set up a GoFundMe page which raised nearly $7,000 for relief efforts and coordinated fundraisers and donation drives in Guam and Las Vegas. This effort also enabled him to bring in two full 40-foot containers and a large private ship of relief goods from Guam, a 40-foot container of relief goods from Hawaii, and over 20 boxes of aid from Las Vegas," she added.

For his part, Mendiola-Long said he could not have done it without the help and support of many. "The island of Tinian was hit hard… I lost my entire business, home, and I had nothing else left… Instead of being down, I used all my emotions to give back to the community and luckily, I have a strong 'ride or die' partner, my wife Arley… It was a team effort from me and my volunteers and we thank Bridge Investment Group, Tinian Mayor's Office and the [Tinian Legislative Delegation] who were all there to support us… The Samaritan's Purse really came through to help us… without them, this award would not be possible," he said.

"It is nice to be recognized but also important for everyone in this room, all the business community members, that we should do our part to help the community now more than ever. Those who are blessed enough to reach out, now is the time," he added.


CNMI COVID-19 VACCINATION UPDATE
WHO CAN REGISTER?
PHASE 1a
• Healthcare workers, high-risk first responders, homebound /bedbound patients, & Man Amko' (≥65 years).
PHASE 1b
• Persons 55 years of age and older.
• Workers part of CNMI infrastructure across public and private sectors: Media & Telecommunications, Food & Agriculture(Grocery store workers, Restaurant/Catering/Bakery workers, and Wholesalers), Transportation Systems, Commercial Facilities, Energy and Utilities, Financial Services, Waste & Water Systems, Education Staff, Faith-Based Leaders, Covid-19 Contractors employed by the CNMI Governor's Task Force, and CNMI (State/Local) Government Employees (All agencies).
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LIMITED SUPPLY
PHASE 1
ADDITIONAL SUPPLY
PHASE 2
BROAD SUPPLY
PHASE 3
As of 2/4/2021:
1 in 5 persons aged 19 years and older have received Dose 1 for COVID-19
99% persons eligible for dose 2 have completed their vaccination series!
HOW DO I REGISTER FOR COVID-19 VACCINATION?
• Register ONLINE at www.vaccinatecnmi.com
• Register over the PHONE by calling (670) 682-SHOT/(7468)
CNMI COVID-19 VACCINATION SCHEDULE
02/08/21 - 02/14/21
SAIPAN
Monday 2/8 - 8am to 6pm
• Dose 1: Available for Phase 1a & 1b
• Dose 2: For those vaccinated on 1/18
Tuesday 2/9 - 8am to 6pm
• Dose 1: Available for Phase 1a & 1b
• Dose 2: For those vaccinated on 1/19
Wednesday 2/10 - 8am to 6pm
• Dose 1: Available for Phase 1a & 1b
• Dose 2: For those vaccinated on 1/20
Thursday 2/11 - 8am to 6pm
• Dose 1: Available for Phase 1a & 1b
• Dose 2: For those vaccinated on 1/21
Friday 2/12 - 8am to 3pm
• Dose 1: Available for Phase 1a & 1b
• Dose 2: For those vaccinated on 1/22
Saturday 2/13 - 8am to 1pm
• Dose 2: For those vaccinated on 01/23
NO VACCINATIONS ON SAIPAN FOR SUNDAY, 2/14
LOCATION: CHCC - MCATS tents located across from the Emergency Room.
PARKING: Parking lot is located across the CHCC campus on Navy Hill Road.
Dose 1 vaccinations are based on availability and depends upon verification of phase status by CHCC. Go online to register at vaccinatecnmi.com or call the Vaccinate CNMI Call Center at (670) 683-SHOT/7468 to secure a vaccination spot.
TINIAN
• Dose 2 for those vaccinated on January 17, 2021.
• A new Dose 1 vaccination schedule for Tinian is coming soon.
LOCATION: Tinian Health Center
ROTA
• Residents on Rota from Phase 1a were vaccinated on February 6th, 2021 with dose 1 of 2.
• A new vaccination schedule for Rota is coming soon.
LOCATION: Rota Health Center
What to Bring
1. Vaccination ID (Located in confirmation email)
2. Government Issued ID (e.g, driver's license or passport)
3. Employee ID or latest paystub (Phase 1b only)
4. Insurance Card (If applicable)
5. DOSE 2 recipients must also bring their Vaccination Record Card (please make your appointment date even if you misplace your card)
VACCINATE CNMI CALL CENTER: (670) 682-SHOT / Mon-Sun 7:30am-8:30pm VACCINATE CNMI WEBSITE REGISTRATION: vaccinatecnmi.com @cnmichcc

Nation

Police beg for help, senators flee in Trump trial video

WASHINGTON (AP)—Prosecutors unveiled chilling new security video in Donald Trump's impeachment trial Wednesday, showing the mob of rioters breaking into the Capitol, smashing windows and doors and searching menacingly for Vice President Mike Pence and House Speaker Nancy Pelosi as overwhelmed police begged on their radios for help.

In the previously unreleased recordings, the House prosecutors displayed gripping scenes of how close the rioters were to the country's leaders, roaming the halls chanting "Hang Mike Pence," some equipped with combat gear. Outside, the mob had set up a makeshift gallows.

Videos of the siege have been circulating since the day of the riot, but the graphic compilation amounted to a more complete narrative, a moment-by-moment retelling of one of the nation's most alarming days. In addition to the evident chaos and danger, it offered fresh details on the attackers, scenes of police heroism and staff whispers and cries of distress.

At one dramatic moment, the video shows police shooting into the crowd through a broken window, killing a San Diego woman, Ashli Babbitt. In another, a police officer is seen being crushed by the mob. Five people died.

The vice president, who had been presiding over a session to certify Joe Biden's victory over Trump—thus earning Trump's criticism—is shown being rushed to safety, where he sheltered in an office with his family just 100 feet from the rioters. Pelosi was evacuated from the complex before the mob prowls her suite of offices, her staff hiding quietly behind closed doors.

Police overwhelmed by the mob frantically announce "we lost the line" and urge officers to safety. One later died.

Though most of the Senate jurors have already made up their minds on acquittal or conviction, they were riveted, and sat silently. Rioters had rummaged through their desks in the very chamber where the impeachment trial is now being held. Screams from the audio and video filled the chamber. One Republican, James Lankford of Oklahoma, bent his head, a GOP colleague putting his hand on his arm in comfort.

"They did it because Donald Trump sent them on this mission," said House prosecutor Stacey Plaskett, the Democratic delegate representing the Virgin Islands.

"President Trump put a target on their backs and his mob broke into the Capitol to hunt them down."

Some senators acknowledged it was the first time they were grasping how perilously close the country came to serious danger.

"When you see all the pieces come together, just the total awareness of that, the enormity of this, threat, not just to us as people, as lawmakers, but the threat to the institution and what Congress represents, it's disturbing," said Republican Lisa Murkowski of Alaska. "Greatly disturbing."

The stunning presentation opened the first full day of arguments in the trial as the prosecutors argued Trump was no "innocent bystander" but the "inciter in chief" of the deadly Capitol riot, a president who spent months spreading election lies and building a mob of supporters primed for his call to stop Biden's victory.

The House Democrats showed piles of evidence from the former president himself—hundreds of Trump tweets and comments that culminated in his Jan. 6 rally cry to go the Capitol and "fight like hell" to overturn his defeat. Trump then did nothing to stem the violence and watched with "glee," they said, as the mob ransacked the iconic building.

"To us it may have felt like chaos and madness, but there was method to the madness that day," said Rep. Jamie Raskin, D-Md., the lead prosecutor, who pointed to Trump as the instigator.

"And when his mob overran and occupied the Senate and attacked the House and assaulted law enforcement, he watched it on TV like a reality show. He reveled in it."

In Biden's early days, signs of Trump-era problems at border

HOUSTON (AP)—The day after she gave birth in a Texas border hospital, Nailet and her newborn son were taken by federal agents to a holding facility that immigrants often refer to as the "icebox."

Inside, large cells were packed with women and their young children. Nailet and her son were housed with 15 other women and given a mat to sleep on, with little space to distance despite the coronavirus pandemic, she said. The lights stayed on round the clock. Children constantly sneezed and coughed.

Nailet, who kept her newborn warm with a quilt she got at the hospital, told The Associated Press that Border Patrol agents wouldn't tell her when they would be released. She and her son were detained for six days in a Border Patrol station. That's twice as long as federal rules generally allow.

"I had to constantly insist that they bring me wipes and diapers," said Nailet, who left Cuba last year and asked that her last name be withheld for fear of retribution if she's forced to return.

Larger numbers of immigrant families have been crossing the U.S.-Mexico border in the first weeks of President Joe Biden's administration. Warning signs are emerging of the border crises that marked former President Donald Trump's term: Hundreds of newly released immigrants are getting dropped off with nonprofit groups, sometimes unexpectedly, and accounts like Nailet's of prolonged detention in short-term facilities are growing.

Measures to control the virus have sharply cut space in holding facilities that got overwhelmed during a surge of arrivals in 2018 and 2019, when reports emerged of families packed into cells and unaccompanied children having to care for each other. U.S. Customs and Border Protection said Wednesday that its enforcement encounters at the southwest border rose 6% in January from the previous month, part of a steady rise since crossings plummeted at the beginning of the pandemic.

Most of the Border Patrol's stations aren't designed to serve children and families or hold people long term. To deal with the new influx, the agency on Tuesday reopened a large tent facility in South Texas to house immigrant families and children.

In a statement last week, U.S. Customs and Border Protection said some of its facilities had reached "maximum safe holding capacity" and cited several challenges: COVID-19 protocols, changes in Mexican law and limited space to hold immigrants.

"We will continue to use all current authorities to avoid keeping individuals in a congregate setting for any length of time," said the agency, which declined an interview request.

Documents show several red flags for clinic shooting suspect

MINNEAPOLIS (AP)—The suspect in the fatal shooting at a Minnesota medical clinic was able to enter the building despite threatening violence there two years earlier, posting a sign near his home about a doctor he disliked and frightening a nurse at a nearby hospital so much that a colleague hit a panic button for help.

Despite these red flags, Gregory Paul Ulrich entered an Allina medical clinic northwest of Minneapolis on Tuesday and opened fire, killing one staff member and injuring four others before he was arrested, authorities said. Authorities also found a suspicious device at the clinic and other devices at a hotel where Ulrich, 67, had been staying.

While police have said they had multiple run-ins with Ulrich, one security expert says it's not clear whether police could have done more to prevent Tuesday's attack.

Ulrich is expected to be charged Thursday with murder and possession of explosive devices, prosecutors said. Ulrich, who remained jailed Wednesday, did not return a phone message left at the jail by The Associated Press.

Allina identified the person who died as Lindsay Overbay, a 37-year-old medical assistant whom family and friends said had two young children. Allina also identified one of the injured as Sherry Curtis, a licensed practical nurse, but didn't give her condition and said it was not identifying the others because of their families' wishes. Three people remained hospitalized Wednesday, with one in critical condition, one in fair condition and the other in good condition.

Authorities released few new details Wednesday, but court documents and interviews with people who know Ulrich paint a picture of a man who appeared volatile, had a problem with abusing painkillers, and was confrontational with medical care workers who treated him in Buffalo, a community of about 15,000 people roughly 40 miles (65 kilometers) northwest of Minneapolis.

Police Chief Pat Budke said Tuesday that Ulrich has a long history of conflict with medical clinics in the area. Requests to talk with Budke about what steps were taken to protect the clinic were not returned Wednesday.

Rich Stanek, a former Hennepin County sheriff who now runs a public safety consulting firm, said although Ulrich was well-known to law enforcement, it's not clear what more police could have done.

"When their deputies responded to calls with him, they were probably already on guard," Stanek said. "But tracking him day to day? Not so much. The courts are going to have to figure out what happened. When he got arrested, if he suffered from mental illness, did they just make a referral and let it go?"

Commonwealth Utilities Corporation
Office of the Executive Director

INVITATION FOR BIDS
CUC-IFB-21-017

CNMI STREETLIGHT EFFICIENCY PROJECT

The Office of the Executive Director for the Commonwealth Utilities Corporation (CUC) is soliciting competitive sealed bids for the supply and delivery of Light Emitting Diode (LED) streetlight luminaires to promote energy and cost saving measures on the power distribution system in Saipan and Rota, Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands.

This project is funded from the United states Department of the Interior (USDOIA).

Prospective Bidders must pre-register with the CUC Procurement & Supply Division. The Bid Package may be obtained from the CUC Procurement and Supply Office, 3rd Floor, Room No. 3, Joeten Dandan Commercial Building, Saipan, between 7:30 a.m. to 11:30 a.m. and 12:30 p.m. to 4:00 p.m., Monday through Friday, except on government observed holidays, upon completion of registration and presentation of a receipt evidencing a non-refundable payment to the CUC Treasury Section, by cash, check or credit card in the amount of $100.00 (non-refundable) for one IFB package set.

One (1) original and Five (5) hard copies must be submitted in a sealed envelope marked *"CUC-IFB-21-017, CNMI Streetlight Efficiency Project)"* to the CUC Procurement & Supply Office, 3rd Floor, Room No. 3, Joeten Dandan Commercial Building, P.O. Box 501220, Saipan, MP 96950, **no later than 10:00 AM (ChST) on March 4, 2021** at which time they will be publicly opened and read aloud. Bids mailed via postal or courier service must be received on or before due date and time or post-marked before submission deadline. Late submissions and conditional offers will not be considered.

A Bid Guarantee of not less than fifteen (15%) of the total bid price shall accompany the bids. The security deposit may be in cash, certified check, cashier's check, or bid bond executed by a surety company holding a certificate of authority from the United States Secretary of Treasury as an acceptable surety or other surety acceptable to the Attorney General.

All insurers' questions, concerns and qualification should be handled by the Department of Commerce Office of the Insurance Commissioner (OIC). The OIC is tasked with regulating and monitoring compliance to the CNMI's Insurance Code (Title 4, Division 7). *Bidders are required to submit a clearance from the OIC certifying their insurer of choice is in compliance with the CNMI's Insurance Code.*

All bidders are advised that CUC assumes no responsibility in any act of omission on the part of the bidders due to lack of information or understanding of the bid requirements in the course of Contractor's preparation of a bid or supply under the contract. The IFB does not commit CUC to award a contract, to pay any cost incurred in the preparation of the bid under this request, or to procure or contract for goods. This bid and the ensuing contract shall be executed as per the CUC Procurement Regulations.

Questions or requests for clarification will be entertained only from registered Proponents and must be submitted in writing **no later than 10:00 AM (ChST) on February 10, 2021** to Manny B. Sablan, CUC Purchasing Administrator, via email manny.sablan@cucgov.org with a copy to Adrian Reyes, CUC Power Division Engineer via email adrian.reyes@cucgov.org; Alfred Palattao, CUC Power Division Engineer via email alfred.palattao@cucgov.org and Marcela Tenorio, Administrative Technician Senior via email marcela.tenorio@cucgov.org.

CUC reserves the right to reject any or all bids and waive any non-material imperfection in the bid proposal if in its sole opinion to do so would be in the best interest of CUC. All bids shall become the property of CUC.

GARY P. CAMACHO
Executive Director

MANNY BOYER SABLAN
Purchasing Administrator

World

Germany to reopen schools, hairdressers as virus cases drop

BERLIN (AP)—German officials agreed Wednesday to reopen schools and hairdressers in the coming weeks, while extending much of the country's coronavirus lockdown until March 7 amid concern that new virus variants could reverse the decline in confirmed cases.

Chancellor Angela Merkel and the country's 16 governors decided to leave in place many facets of the current lockdown that were due to expire on Sunday, and set a new target of 35 weekly cases per 100,000 inhabitants before letting small stores, museums and other businesses reopen.

The government's previous goal had been to push the number of new cases per 100,000 inhabitants each week below 50, to enable reliable contact-tracing. It peaked at nearly 200 just before Christmas but is now down to 68 nationwide, a trend Merkel credited to people respecting the existing measures.

"We have this great uncertainty with the mutation," Merkel said, explaining the new benchmark. "It will gain the upper hand. The old virus will disappear. We will live with the new virus and we can't yet judge this new virus and its behavior."

"If we can't achieve better tracing then it can quickly happen again there we'll get exponential growth," she told reporters. "That's why we have to be so careful."

Still, officials agreed that states will be able to reopen schools and kindergartens sooner, with some, such as Berlin, announcing that they will gradually resume classes in elementary schools from Feb. 22. Several governors had argued the measure was necessary to relieve parents of the burden of home schooling and make sure that underprivileged children don't fall too far behind.

The country's strained medical personnel had cautioned against such a move.

Ahead of the meeting, the head of the German Interdisciplinary Association for Intensive Care and Emergency Medicine, or DIVI, warned that the reopening of schools and kindergartens would lead to virus infections re-emerging.

"Schools and kindergartens are unfortunately places where the virus is passed on," DIVI President Gernot Marx told the Rheinische Post daily newspaper. "The kids carry it into the families, and most teachers are not vaccinated. As an intensive care doctor I am therefore telling you: this is irresponsible."

Thai police arrest 10 activists at pro-democracy rally

BANGKOK (AP)—The first major demonstration this year by Thailand's student-led pro-democracy movement on Wednesday turned into a confrontation with police, who quickly arrested 10 activists who were putting up banners and posters.

The rally by more than 1,000 people in central Bangkok was called by the Ratsadorn movement, which campaigned last year for Prime Minister Prayuth Chan-ocha and his government to step down, the constitution to be amended and the reform of the monarchy to make it more accountable.

Wednesday's rally focused on the detention of four top protest leaders who were charged Tuesday with defaming the monarchy, or lese majeste. The movement has been seeking the abolition of the lese majeste law, which carries a punishment of three to 15 years in prison on each count.

"Today, we are gathering here to start our first fight after the system of injustice took away our friends," said Panupong Jadnok, a protest leader.

The rally began tensely when police arrested 10 activists who were putting up banners and signs in the public space. They were charged with littering.

After several speeches, protest leaders led the crowd to the police station where the activists were being held to demand their release.

At least 100 police faced off against the protesters when a tear gas canister exploded. An angered crowd scattered and then pushed back against the police, but calm was restored after a few minutes.

Cambodia begins vaccination campaign against COVID-19

PHNOM PENH, Cambodia (AP)—Three sons of Cambodian leader Hun Sen were inoculated against COVID-19 on Wednesday as the country began distributing vaccines donated from its closest ally, China.

Hun Manet, the head of the army and Hun Sen's eldest son, urged all Cambodians to be vaccinated and thanked China for the donation.

"I trust this vaccine and that is why I have been vaccinated with it," Hun Manet said.

China is donating 1 million doses of the Chinese-made Sinopharm vaccine, enough for half a million people, and the first shipment of 600,000 doses arrived in Cambodia on Sunday.

Hun Sen's two sons-in-law, government ministers and other officials were vaccinated at a state-run hospital.

Hun Sen himself backtracked on receiving the vaccine because he is 68.

In China, the Sinopharm vaccine was approved only for people ages 18-59 because that is the population studied in clinical trials. While there is not yet data on its effectiveness for other age groups, other countries have discretion to use it in older people.

China is Cambodia's biggest investor and its closest political partner, while Hun Sen is shunned by some Western nations who consider his government to be repressive. Cambodia in turn backs Beijing's geopolitical positions in international forums on issues such as China's territorial claims in the South China Sea.

China also announced it would give Cambodia 1 million doses of the vaccine produced by Beijing Institute of Biological Products Co., but a date for delivering the rest of the promised amount has not yet been set.

VEHICLE FOR SALE

2016 KIA FORTE EX 2WD 5DN - BLACK COLOR

For more information, please contact Bank of Guam through its counsel, Robert T. Torres at Telephone Numbers (670) 234-7859 - (670) 234-5750.

Bids will be closed on FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 19, 2021 AT 5:00PM

The Bank reserves the right to reject any or all offers

The vehicle will be sold to the highest bidder "as is, where is" without any warranties – **Minimum bid is $6,000.00**
The winning bidder shall tender the full bid amount upon acceptance

Inspection and a vehicle bid form can be obtained from Bank of Guam counsel's office at:
ROBERT TENORIO TORRES
Attorney at Law
Chalan Kiya
P.O. Box 503758 CK, Saipan, MP 96950

JOB VACANCY ANNOUNCEMENT
AUDIT MANAGER

EXAMINATION NO. OPA-21-001
Opening Date: 1/14/21 Closing Date: Until Filled

For more information, please visit our website at www.opacnmi.com or come visit us at our office in Capitol Hill. Interested persons may also pick up a copy of the Examination Announcement at the Office of Personnel Management (OPM) in Garapan.

Office of the Public Auditor
Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands
Website: http://opacnmi.com
Address: 1236 Yap Drive, Capital Hill, Saipan, MP 96950
Mailing Address: PO Box 501399, Saipan MP 96950
Email: mail@opacnmi.com
Phone: (670) 322-6481 Fax: (670) 322-7812

PACIFIC ISLANDS CLUB SAIPAN

Chief Accountant: Bachelor's Degree in Business Administration (may be foreign equivalent). Acts as primary support to the Finance Director in the financial administration of the Company's policies and procedures. Responsible for maintaining in full integrity of the company's financial statements including but not limited to Balance Sheets, Profit and Loss Statements and Cash Flow Statements. 60-months experience as Accountant or Chief Accountant.

Send resume to: Interpacific Resort Saipan Corp., dba Pacific Island Club Saipan, Attn: Human Resources, P.O. Box 502370, Saipan, MP 96950.

DIVISION OF COASTAL RESOURCES MANAGEMENT
P. O. Box 501304, Saipan MP 96950 | Gualo Rai Center, Saipan
TEL. NO. 664-8300 | FAX NO. 664-8315
www.dcrm.gov.mp

NOTICE OF APPLICATION
As of February 12, 2021

THE FOLLOWING IS A PUBLIC ANNOUNCEMENT OF COASTAL PERMIT APPLICATIONS RECEIVED BY THE DCRM OFFICE:

APPLICANT	DATE APPLICATION RECEIVED	APPLICATION PROJECT DESCRIPTION	LOCATION	TYPE	STATUS
1. Fang Wang	01/21/2021 SWm-2021-014	Roof Repairs & Construction of Fence	Susupe, Saipan	Wetland	Approved* 02/01/2021
2. Bridge Investment Group, LLC	01/08/2021 TMS-2020-X-082	Tinian Diamond Casino, Restaurant, Tinian Diamond Suites, & Ferry Ticketing Booth	San Jose, Tinian	Ports & Industrial	30-Day Postponement of Permit Decision
3. Department of Public Works	02/09/2021 SMS-2021-015	Construction of Route 36	Talafofo-Marpi Windward/Ch. Kalabera	Major Siting	Application Review*

NMIAC §15-10-210 of the CRM Rules and Regulations requires all permit applications to be published in a newspaper for general circulation within the CNMI within 15 days of receipt of application. The list reflects recently received permit applications and those with a recent change in status. New applications are marked with an asterisk (*).

The Public is invited to submit written comments regarding any of the above projects for which a permit decision has not been issued. All permit comments should identify the project by application number. Your comments should be mailed or hand-delivered to the DCRM Office. All persons who desire a public hearing regarding any project may do so by submitting a written request for a public hearing to the DCRM Office within fourteen (14) days for minor permits (APCs) and proposed amended major sitings. Public Hearings are required for all new major siting projects. All public hearing notices are published in a local newspaper of general circulation. Residents of Rota and Tinian may submit comments and hearing requests to their local DCRM Coordinator. Persons wishing to retain the right to appeal a DCRM Permit decision must file a notice of appeal with the DCRM office within thirty (30) days of the issuance of the DCRM permit decision as provided in Part 200 § 15-10-235 of the DCRM Regulations.

Off The Wall

Aging desktop was source of lawyer's accidental cat filter

RICHMOND, Texas (AP)—Texas attorney Rod Ponton's appearance as a fluffy kitten during an online court hearing provided a moment of levity to a pandemic- and Zoom-fatigued world.

But that specific, adorable filter may be tough to find for anyone looking to replicate the viral moment.

Ponton told The Associated Press that he was using his assistant's 10-year-old desktop Dell computer when he logged in for a routine civil forfeiture hearing Tuesday in Presidio County, Texas, where he serves as prosecutor.

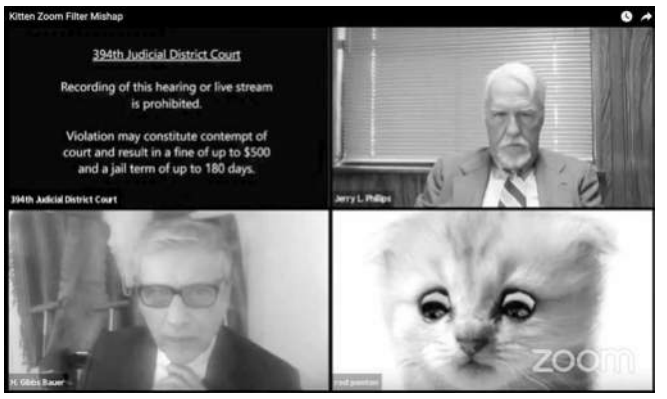
Ponton says his appearance looked normal on the webcam as he waited to be let into the Zoom hearing in Judge Roy Ferguson's court. But when the hearing began, to his shock and dismay, he was a cat.

"I think everybody in the world's seen the video now and heard me trying as I struggled to try to un-cat myself," he said.

Ponton said he's still trying to untangle the mystery, but he believes the computer's software and the assistant's young child are the likeliest culprits.

Texas-based Dell Technologies says the aging desktop was likely in need of a software update.

"Mr. Ponton was likely running an outdated driver which may have held him in cat filter limbo a little too long," said Glen Robson, chief technology officer at Dell's client solutions group. "While those of us techies were probably cringing watching that video, I'm sure cat lovers everywhere were celebrating."


Kitten Zoom Filter Mishap
394th Judicial District Court
Recording of this hearing or live stream is prohibited.
Violation may constitute contempt of court and result in a fine of up to $500 and a jail term of up to 180 days.
394th Judicial District Court
Jerry L. Phillips
zoom

AP

This image from video shows a hearing from the 394th Judicial District Court of Texas. The hearing took a detour when an attorney showed up looking like a kitten.

Video filters and virtual backgrounds have exploded in popularity as much of the world's activities moved online during the pandemic. One commonly used program is Snap Camera, which lets users download all kinds of filters, including one that makes a person appear like a potato (as one woman famously did early in the pandemic).

Separately, Zoom offers filters of its own through its app, though none as realistic as Ponton's attorney-cat.

Mishaps in online courtrooms have occurred throughout the pandemic as the legal community adjusts to remote proceedings. A Georgia case last year was disrupted by hold music, background noise and the neglected mute button. And in Florida, a judge told attorneys they must get out of bed and put on clothing before appearing on video for proceedings.

Ferguson, the judge who oversaw Tuesday's hearing and posted the video online, told The Associated Press he had no idea the clip would become an instant hit.

"My phone started to melt within about two minutes, and I realized that this was going to take on a life of its own," Ferguson said.

Shell horn still plays tune after 18,000 years

WASHINGTON (AP)—A large conch shell overlooked in a museum for decades is now thought to be the oldest known seashell instrument—and it still works, producing a deep, plaintive bleat, like a foghorn from the distant past.

The shell was found during the 1931 excavation of a cave with prehistoric wall paintings in the French Pyrenees and assumed to be a ceremonial drinking cup. Archaeologists from the University of Toulouse recently took a fresh look and determined it had been modified thousands of years ago to serve as a wind instrument. They invited a French horn player to play it.

"Hearing it for the first time, for me it was a big emotion—and a big stress," said archaeologist Carole Fritz.

She feared that playing the 12-inch (31-centimeter) shell might damage it, but it didn't. The horn produced clear C, C sharp and D notes.

The researchers estimate it to be around 18,000 years old. Their findings were published Wednesday in the journal Science Advances.

Conch shells have been used widely in musical and ceremonial traditions, including in ancient Greece, Japan, India and Peru. The shell instrument found in the Marsoulas cave is now the oldest known example. Previously, a conch shell instrument found in Syria had been dated to about 6,000 years old, said another Toulouse archaeologist, Gilles Tosello.

The latest discovery was made after a recent inventory at the Natural History Museum of Toulouse. The researchers noticed some unusual holes in the shell. Crucially, the tip of the shell was broken off, creating a hole large enough to blow through. Microscopic inspection revealed the opening was the result of deliberate craftsmanship, not accidental wear, according to Tosello.

By inserting a tiny medical camera, they found that another hole had been carefully drilled in the shell's inner chamber. They also detected traces of red pigment on the mouth of the conch, matching a decorative pattern found on the wall of Marsoulas cave.

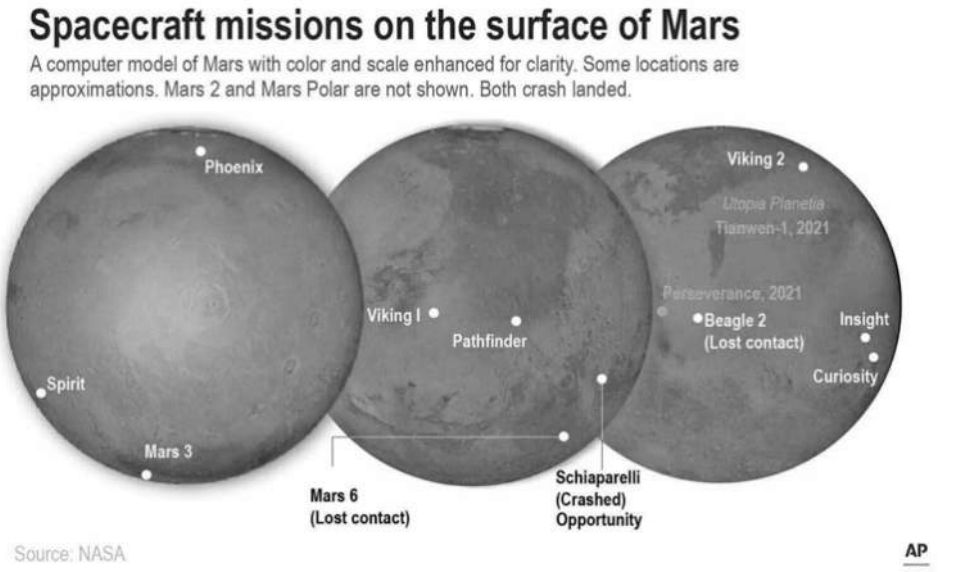
"This is classic, really solid archaeology," said Margaret Conkey, an archaeologist at the University of California, Berkeley, who was not involved in the research. "This discovery reminds us that their lives were much richer and more complex than just stone tools and big game."

Marsoulas cave is not located near an ocean, so the prehistoric people must have either moved around widely or used trading networks to obtain the shell, Conkey and the researchers said.

"What makes conch shells so interesting is that the spiral cavity formed by nature is perfectly adept at resonating musically," said Rasoul Morteza, a composer in Montreal who has studied conch shell acoustics, and was not involved in the paper.

Science & Technology

Chinese spacecraft enters Mars' orbit, joining UAE



Map of Mars shows landing sites.

AP

BEIJING (AP)—A Chinese spacecraft went into orbit around Mars on Wednesday on an expedition to land a rover on the surface and scout for signs of ancient life, authorities announced in a landmark step in the country's most ambitious deep-space mission yet.

The arrival of Tianwen-1 after a journey of seven months and nearly 300 million miles (475 million kilometers) is part of an unusual burst of activity at Mars: A spacecraft from the United Arab Emirates swung into orbit around the red planet on Tuesday, and a U.S. rover is set to arrive next week.

China's space agency said the five-ton combination orbiter and rover fired its engine to reduce its speed, allowing it to be captured by Mars' gravity.

"Entering orbit has been successful ... making it our country's first artificial Mars satellite," the agency announced.

The mission is bold even for a space program that has racked up a steady stream of achievements and brought prestige to China's ruling Communist Party.

If all goes as planned, the rover will separate from the spacecraft in a few months and touch down safely on Mars, making China only the second nation to pull off such a feat. The rover, a solar-powered vehicle about the size of a golf cart, will collect data on underground water and look for evidence that the planet may have once harbored microscopic life.

Tianwen, the title of an ancient poem, means "Quest for Heavenly Truth."

Landing a spacecraft on Mars is notoriously difficult. Smashed Russian and European spacecraft litter the landscape along with a failed U.S. lander. About a dozen orbiters missed the mark. In 2011, a Mars-bound Chinese orbiter that was part of a Russian mission didn't make it out of Earth orbit.

Only the U.S. has successfully touched down on Mars—eight times, beginning with two Viking missions in the 1970s. An American lander and rover are in operation today.

China's attempt will involve a parachute, rocket firings and airbags. Its proposed landing site is a vast, rock-strewn plain called Utopia Planitia, where the U.S. Viking 2 lander touched down in 1976.

Before the arrival this week of the Chinese spacecraft and the UAE's orbiter, six other spacecraft were already operating around Mars: three U.S., two European and one Indian.

All three of the latest missions were launched in July to take advantage of the close alignment between Earth and Mars that happens only once every two years.

A NASA rover called Perseverance is aiming for a Feb. 18 landing. It, too, will search for signs of ancient microscopic life, collecting rocks that will be returned to Earth in about a decade.

China's secretive, military-linked space program has racked up a series of achievements. In December, it brought moon rocks back to Earth for the first time since the 1970s. China was also the first country to land a spacecraft on the little-explored far side of the moon in 2019.

China is also building a permanent space station and planning a crewed lunar mission and a possible permanent research base on the moon, though no dates have yet been proposed.

While most contacts with NASA are blocked by Congress and China is not a participant in the International Space Station, it has increasingly cooperated with the European Space Agency and countries such as Argentina, France and Austria. Early on, China cooperated with the Soviet Union and then Russia.

Plume of Sahara dust caused spike in European air pollution

BERLIN (AP) — A plume of Sahara dust that has blanketed parts of southern and central Europe in recent days caused a short, sharp spike in air pollution across the region, researchers said Tuesday.

The European Commission's Copernicus satellite monitoring program said measured levels of particles smaller than 10 micrometers—so-called PM10s—increased in places such as Barcelona, Spain, and in the French cities of Lyon and Marseille on Sunday.

The cloud of fine sand blown northward from Algeria tinted skies red and mixed with fresh snowfall in the Alps and Pyrenees, leaving slopes looking orange.

While PM10 particles can enter the lungs, causing breathing difficulties, asthma attacks and other health problems, the concentration of Sahara dust didn't reach levels considered harmful.

Life & Style

Morgan Wallen tells fans not to defend his racist language

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (AP)—Country star Morgan Wallen asked fans not to downplay the racist language he was caught saying on camera and said that he accepted the punishments he faced.

Wallen

TMZ posted a video last week of Wallen saying a racial slur and Wallen apologized at the time. Wallen posted a five-minute Instagram video Wednesday night saying he had let so many people down, including his parents and his son.

"Our actions matter. Our words matter. And I want to encourage anyone that is watching to please learn from my mistake. There's no reason to downplay what I did," he said.

He said he was waiting until he could personally apologize to people he had hurt. He said that the video was taken after a three-day "bender," but he has since gotten sober.

Wallen said that he accepted invitations from Black organizations, executives and leaders to have honest conversations.

"They offered me grace and they also paired that with an offer to learn and to grow," he said.

Wallen also said he accepted any punishments that he faced. Wallen's songs were removed from radio stations, streaming services took his music off their top playlists and his record label suspended him.

Gina Carano fired from 'Mandalorian' after social media post

LOS ANGELES (AP)—Lucasfilm says Gina Carano is no longer a part of "The Mandalorian" cast after many online called for her firing over a social media post that likened the experience of Jews during the Holocaust to the U.S. political climate.

A spokesperson with the production company said in a statement on Wednesday that Carano is not currently employed by Lucasfilm with "no plans for her to be in the future."

"Nevertheless, her social media posts denigrating people based on their cultural and religious identities are abhorrent and unacceptable," the statement read.

Carano

Carano fell under heavy criticism after she posted that "Jews were beaten in the streets, not by Nazi soldiers but by their neighbors.... even by children."

The actor continued to say, "Because history is edited, most people today don't realize that to get to the point where Nazi soldiers could easily round up thousands of Jews, the government first made their own neighbors hate them simply for being Jews. How is that any different from hating someone for their political views?"

Carano, who played the recurring character Cara Dune on the "Star Wars" series, deleted the post but it was widely shared online and spurred the #FireGinaCarano hashtag to trend. Her character appeared in several episodes of the second season of "The Mandalorian," a series about a bounty hunter and his quest to unite a powerful, young user of the Force with a Jedi Knight.

Dune, who in the second season is a lawperson on a frontier planet, frequently teams up with the title character to fight an old nemesis: remnants of the evil Galactic Empire.

LVMH to put Fenty fashion collection on pause

NEW YORK (AP)—LVMH Moët Hennessy Louis Vuitton, the world's largest luxury group, has put Rihanna's Fenty fashion collection on hold.

The move, confirmed by LVMH Wednesday, comes nearly two years after the fashion conglomerate announced the collaboration with the pop artist and business mogul. Rihanna became the first Black woman to head a luxury house with LVMH, which owns such labels as Christian Dior, Givenchy and Louis Vuitton.

"Rihanna and LVMH have jointly made the decision to put on hold the RTW activity, based in Europe, pending better conditions," according to the statement by LVMH emailed to The Associated Press.

Rihanna

A representative for Rihanna couldn't immediately be reached.

LVMH said that the Paris-based company and Rihanna will focus their efforts on the growth and long-term development of Fenty on cosmetics, skincare and lingerie.

WWD first reported the news on LVMH's pause of Fenty fashion collection.

Film, TV maker Joss Whedon faces 'Buffy' actor abuse claims

LOS ANGELES (AP)—Prominent film and TV creator Joss Whedon, who faced a claim of abusive behavior on the set of "Justice League," drew criticism Wednesday from actors who worked with him on "Buffy the Vampire Slayer."

The first and most direct allegations came from Charisma Carpenter, who said in a social media post that Whedon has a "history of creating toxic and hostile work environments," including the one she experienced on "Buffy" and while she was pregnant.

Sarah Michelle Gellar, who starred as the title character on the 1997 to 2003 series, responded to Carpenter's post with a supportive if opaque online message of her own.

Whedon

"While I am proud to have my name associated with Buffy Summers, I don't want to be forever associated with the name Joss Whedon," Gellar wrote. She is focused on her family and the pandemic and planned no further statements at this time, she said, adding, "I stand with all survivors of abuse and am proud of them for speaking out."

Representatives for Whedon didn't immediately respond to a request for comment from the writer, director and producer.

Among Carpenter's allegations: During her pregnancy, Whedon called her "fat," joked about firing her and, at one point, called her into a meeting during which he allegedly asked if she was "going to keep it," apparently a reference to her pregnancy, and attacked her character and religion. She said she was "unceremoniously fired" from the role of Cordelia the following season.

Hustler publisher Larry Flynt dies at 78

LOS ANGELES (AP)—Porn purveyor Larry Flynt, who built Hustler magazine into an adult entertainment empire while championing First Amendment rights, died Wednesday. He was 78.

Flynt had been in frail health and died of heart failure at his Hollywood Hills home, said his nephew, Jimmy Flynt Jr.

From his beginnings as an Ohio strip club owner to his reign as founder of one of the most explicit adult-oriented magazines, Flynt constantly challenged the establishment and became a target for the religious right and feminist groups.

Flynt scored a surprising U.S. Supreme Court victory over the Rev. Jerry Falwell, who had sued him for libel after a 1983 Hustler alcohol ad suggested Falwell had lost his virginity to his mother in an outhouse.

Flynt's company produced not only Hustler but other niche publications. He owned a video production company, various websites, a Los Angeles-area casino and 10 Hustler boutiques. He also licensed the Hustler name to independently owned strip clubs.

His publishing and financial successes were offset in equal measure by controversies and tragedies.

Shot by a sniper in 1978, Flynt was paralyzed from the waist down and used a wheelchair the rest of his life. He fought battles with drug and alcohol addiction, and his fourth wife died of a heroin overdose.

His daughter, Lisa Flynt-Fugate, died in a 2014 car crash in Ohio at age 47.

Woman frets over ending her on-and-off relationship

DEAR ABBY: My now-ex and I had a complicated, four-year on-again, off-again relationship. I finally ended it five months ago, but I'm still not sure whether I made the right choice.

Every guy I date I compare to him. It's hard to imagine myself with anyone else. We were so similar, and we made so many plans together. Our families weren't crazy about us being together. I backed away many times because I wasn't sure of us in the long term.

Maybe it was because I'm only 22 and scared of committing forever, or because I want to be a doctor and have years of schooling ahead of me. Our relationship was always very hot and passionate, but it turned very cold and distant sometimes.

I'm confused. Did I leave for the hope of something better or a fear of commitment? Or was it because I'm young and still trying to figure out my life and felt he was holding me back?

SECOND THOUGHTS IN ARIZONA

DEAR SECOND THOUGHTS: Your life is just beginning. If you are sincere about your desire to be a doctor, you may have to postpone other aspects of your life until you are closer to your goal. The last thing you need in the near term is the distraction of a hot and passionate/cold and distant romance.

You mentioned that you backed away "many times" because you were unsure about the two of you in the long term. Please stop tormenting yourself. When you meet Mr. Right, you won't have those second thoughts because you will know the relationship is right.

DEAR ABBY: I'm in a profession that I don't enjoy anymore, and I would love to venture into another field of interest. I have been in this industry for 10 years, and it carries a lot of stress that I'd like to rid myself of. My concern, however, is that my husband is not working, so I bear all the financial weight.

We have two kids, and he's a stay-at-home father, which is what we want for our children. We have been fortunate to be able to do this on my income alone, but I'm afraid this has obligated me to maintain a job in which I'm not happy in order to ensure my family's financial security.

How can I try to discover my passion so I can be happy in my day-to-day while keeping bills paid and food on the table? Is this even possible, or must I suck it up and do what's best for my family?

SEEKING SOMETHING NEW

DEAR SEEKING: If you haven't already begun, start a dialogue about this with your husband. If he's willing to change the dynamic of your arrangement, the answer could be as simple as his taking a part-time job to ease some of the financial burden on you while you explore your options. I'm sorry you didn't mention how old your children are, because after COVID restrictions are lifted and they are back in the classroom, he might be able to find something during their school hours.

HAPPY NEW YEAR TO MY ASIAN READERS WHO CELEBRATE THE LUNAR NEW YEAR: The Year of the Ox begins today. I wish a happy, healthy new year to all who celebrate this holiday. People born in the Year of the Ox are steadfast and determined, and that's no bull.

LOVE, ABBY

For an excellent guide to becoming a better conversationalist and a more sociable person, order "How to Be Popular." Send your name and mailing address, plus check or money order for $8 (U.S. funds) to: Dear Abby, Popularity Booklet, P.O. Box 447, Mount Morris, IL 61054-0447. (Shipping and handling are included in the price.)

DEAR ABBY

By ABIGAIL VAN BUREN
UNIVERSAL PRESS SYNDICATE

Dear Abby is written by Abigail Van Buren, also known as Jeanne Phillips, and was founded by her mother, Pauline Phillips. Contact Dear Abby at www.DearAbby.com or P.O. Box 69440, Los Angeles, CA 90069.

Pastimes

Calvin and Hobbes

By Bill Waterson

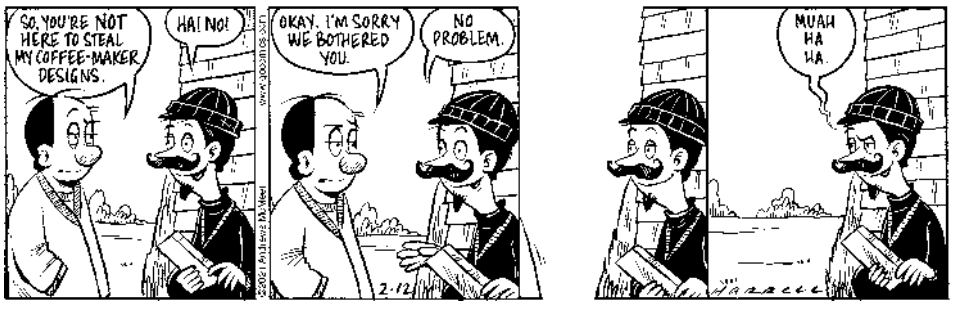
FROM HIGH IN THE SKY, STUPENDOUS MAN TAKES ADVANTAGE OF EARTH'S STRONG GRAVITY!
A DIRECT HIT! STUPENDOUS MAN TRIUMPHS!
WITH ANNOYING GIRL VANQUISHED, THE WHIRLWIND WONDER ZOOMS BACK TO RESUME HIS SECRET IDENTITY!
DID YOU SAVE THE DAY?
JUSTICE REIGNS ONCE MORE!
CALVIN, SUSIE'S MOM JUST CALLED. I WANT TO TALK TO YOU.

Garfield®

By Jim Davis

Adam@home

By Bryan Basset



The Duplex

By Glenn McCoy

BARK BARK..GRRR.. YAP BARK BARK
ROWF BARK BARK YAP BARK BARK!
THAT'S WHAT I'D SAY TO THE SQUIRRELS IF I WERE YOU!
SQUIRREL MOMS DON'T EVEN WEAR ARMY BOOTS!

CROSSWORD

By Eugene Sheffer

ACROSS

1 Reacts in horror
6 Feedbag bit
9 Urban carrier
12 Birdlike
13 — -Magnon
14 In the style of
15 "Sexy" Beatles girl
16 Seasonal work assignment
18 Deletes
20 Stratagem
21 Mahal preceder
23 NYPD investigator
24 Streisand title role
25 "East of Eden" twin
27 — Park, Colorado
29 Polite refusal
31 Main dish
35 Olive — (military uniforms)
37 Evict
38 Good, in Guadalajara
41 Mel of Cooperstown
43 Hotel amenity
44 Jai —
45 Nativity figure
47 Clerical position
49 "Wheel of Fortune" host
52 Shelter
53 Year, in Mexico
54 Sculptor's material
55 Designer monogram
56 Life story
57 Of equal size

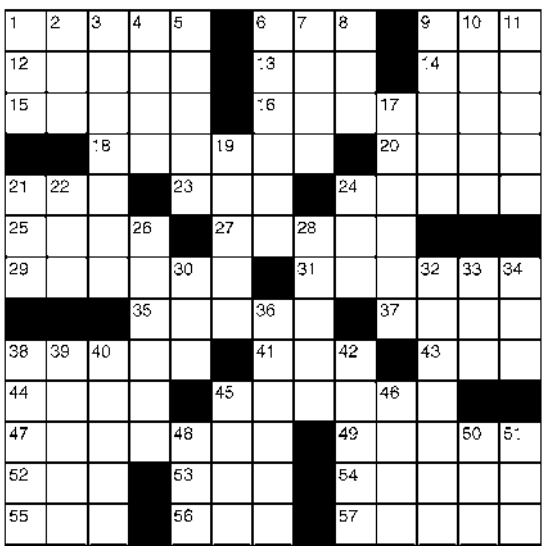
DOWN

1 Ozone, for one
2 Director DuVernay
3 Moonlighter's gig
4 Two of a kind
5 Golf great Sam
6 Groups of eight
7 War god
8 Male turkey
9 Bayou cuisine
10 "It's — cause!"
11 Tower of confusion
17 Magician's word
19 "Bye!"
21 — chi
22 Pitcher's pride
24 Hankering
26 Boring type
28 Exams
30 "No seats"
32 Work that's needed ASAP
33 Sixth sense
34 Greek vowel
36 Yogi's little pal
38 In the worst way
39 "— Gold" (Fonda film)
40 Painter's stand
42 "Selma" actress Thompson
45 Singer Mitchell
46 Bits of butter
48 Poke
50 Blackbird
51 Beer barrel

Solution time: 25 mins.

A	M	O	K		K	I	T		A	K	I	N
D	A	D	A		I	C	H		S	I	S	I
D	R	O	Z		K	I	A		S	N	A	P
S	A	R	C	N	G		W	H	I	S	K	S
			C	O	F			A	S	H		
T	S	K	S		I	N	K	S	T	A	I	N
A	R	I			S	R	I			S	S	N
J	O	N	A	T	H	A	N		G	A	M	E
		D	I	L			K	A	Y			
M	E	N	S	C	H		I	M	P	A	R	T
C	R	E	L		A	P	E		S	L	A	Y
E	L	S	E		L	O	S		U	P	U	P
:	L	S	S		F	I	I		M	O	L	E

Yesterday's answer 2-12



STUMPED? For answers lo today's crossword, call **1-900-226-5955**! 99¢ per minute, touch-tone/rotary phones. (18+ only.) A King Features service, NYC.

CELEBRITIES BORN ON THIS DAY: Christina Ricci, 41; Darren Aronofsky, 52; Josh Brolin, 53; Arsenio Hall, 65.

Happy Birthday: Stick to your plans. Taking unnecessary risks will set you back. Stay focused on what you can accomplish and how best to use your skills, attributes and intellect to get ahead. Keep temptation at bay, and you'll overcome a setback due to indulgent behavior. Your personal life will improve if you are attentive and live up to your promises. Your numbers are 6, 14, 23, 32, 37, 39, 47.

ARIES *(March 21-April 19):* Be secretive about the changes you want to make. Get involved in conversations or projects that will broaden your scope about something you'd like to pursue. The connections you make while researching will help you excel. Romance will brighten your day. ✪✪✪

TAURUS *(April 20-May 20):* Don't take anything or anyone for granted. If you want to get things done, work alone. Expect to be contradicted if you get into a debate with a colleague or someone who doesn't share your beliefs or concerns; be amicable. ✪✪✪✪

GEMINI *(May 21-June 20):* Expect a mix-up due to misinterpretation. You'll have to be articulate to ensure you get your point across and your requests handled adequately. Leave nothing to chance, and you'll avoid scrutiny. Personal growth, self-improvement and romance are favored. ✪✪

CANCER (*June 21-July 22):* Take your time, look at every angle and make changes based on what's best for you. How you go about your responsibilities will tie into an opportunity that comes your way. Patience and preparation will make differences to the outcome. ✪✪✪✪✪

LEO *(July 23-Aug. 22):* Be sure that the changes you want to make are financially sound and doable. Don't jeopardize your position or reputation to impress someone putting you on the spot. Opportunities exist, but picking the right one will be crucial. ✪✪✪

VIRGO *(Aug. 23-Sept. 22):* You'll have plenty of innovative ideas and attract interest in what you want to pursue. Consider who offers the most extraordinary insight, then develop a partnership that will make it easier for you to reach your goal. Research in order to find out what's trending. ✪✪✪

LIBRA *(Sept. 23-Oct. 22):* Overspending will be tempting. Crunch the numbers before you decide to take on debt. Look for a way to get what you want for less, and you will avoid an argument with someone who shares expenses with you. ✪✪✪

SCORPIO *(Oct. 23-Nov. 21):* You'll be faced with opposition, discord and uncertainty if you have neglected to take care of personal matters. Stop procrastinating; start taking care of unfinished business before someone backs you into a corner and jeopardizes your freedom. ✪✪✪✪

SAGITTARIUS *(Nov. 22-Dec. 21):* Don't let someone get in your way or mislead you. Focus on your goal, and surround yourself with people who share your concerns. An opportunity to earn your living doing something you enjoy will give you a new lease on life. ✪✪

CAPRICORN *(Dec. 22-Jan. 19):* Put time and effort into home, family and making positive adjustments that will bring you closer to those your love. Fixing up your surroundings and adding to your comfort and convenience are favored as long as you don't go over budget. ✪✪✪✪

AQUARIUS *(Jan. 20-Feb. 18):* Make your point clear when dealing with a friend or relative, but don't let your temper escalate. How well you deal with controversy will determine the outcome. Diplomacy and mindfulness will pay off. A romantic gesture will enhance your love life. ✪✪✪

PISCES *(Feb. 19-March 20):* Focus on change. Consider what makes you happy, and head in that direction. The effort you put in to improve your lifestyle, handling of money and going after a job you enjoy will help you achieve your goal. ✪✪✪

Birthday Baby: You are benevolent, charming and impulsive. You are fair and proud.

✪: Avoid conflicts; work behind the scenes. ✪✪: You can accomplish, but don't rely on others. ✪✪✪: Focus and you'll reach your goals. ✪✪✪✪: Aim high; start new projects. ✪✪✪✪✪: Nothing can stop you; go for gold.

Visit Eugenialast.com, or join Eugenia on Twitter/Facebook/LinkedIn.

EUGENIA LAST

THE LAST WORD IN ASTROLOGY

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SUDOKU

Conceptis Sudoku *By Dave Green*

	4			9			1	
3		8			4			5
				3			7	
	6							
4		5				3		1
							2	
	2			7				
6			5			2		4
	8			1			9	

Difficulty Level ★★★★ 2/12

Sudoku is a number-placing puzzle based on a 9x9 grid with several given numbers. The object is to place the numbers 1 to 9 in the empty squares so that each row, each column and each 3x3 box contains the same number only once. The difficulty level of the Conceptis Sudoku increases from Monday to Saturday.

Yesterday's Answer

4	7	8	5	1	9	2	6	3
5	6	3	7	8	2	1	9	4
9	1	2	6	3	4	5	7	8
8	2	9	1	5	6	3	4	7
1	5	4	9	7	3	8	2	6
7	3	6	4	2	8	9	1	5
6	4	1	8	9	5	7	3	2
2	8	7	3	4	1	6	5	9
3	9	5	2	6	7	4	8	1

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WONDERWORD®

By DAVID OUELLET

HOW TO PLAY: All the words listed below appear in the puzzle — horizontally, vertically, diagonally and even backward. Find them, circle each letter of the word and strike it off the list. The leftover letters spell the **WONDERWORD.**

MIRRORS Solution: 5 letters

D	S	T	A	N	D	T	W	S	D	E	V	R	A	C
C	L	S	L	E	N	G	T	H	C	D	I	E	A	I
S	I	O	A	A	R	A	Y	O	L	G	S	D	R	A
E	A	T	G	L	R	A	L	M	E	E	I	R	E	S
S	N	E	S	E	G	A	U	E	A	S	O	O	V	O
N	L	O	L	U	S	R	C	Q	N	L	N	B	L	M
E	R	S	I	E	R	L	O	O	S	T	U	D	I	O
L	E	E	R	S	E	O	I	O	S	O	C	E	S	O
G	B	Y	D	A	U	T	C	Ⓗ	M	P	O	M	T	Z
N	R	C	R	O	C	L	Ⓐ	E	A	T	L	A	I	N
A	A	N	V	E	M	Ⓝ	L	Y	D	I	O	R	F	G
T	B	A	L	I	Ⓖ	H	T	I	F	C	R	F	T	I
C	L	F	B	R	A	S	S	A	L	O	N	O	U	S
E	E	B	E	A	U	T	Y	T	I	N	A	V	O	E
R	O	U	N	D	E	N	T	I	S	T	A	L	F	D

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Barber, Beauty, Border, Brass, Cars, Carved, Clean, Clear, Color, Decor, Dentist, Design, Door, Dusty, Edges, Elegant, Fancy, Film, Flat, Frame, Glass, Gold, Groom, Gym, Hair, Hang, Home, Illusion, Laser, Length, Lenses, Light, Modern, Mosaic, Nails, Optic, Outfit, Oval, Rectangle, Reflection, Round, Rustic, Salon, Silver, Square, Stand, Stare, Studio, Vanity, Vision, Zoom

Yesterday's Answer: Burgers

Jo's Jewels Collector's Edition is back by popular demand! Purchase online at www.WonderWordBooks.com or call 1-800-642-6480.

LeBron leads Lakers past Thunder in OT

LOS ANGELES (AP) — LeBron James hit the tying 3-pointer late in regulation and then broke up the Thunder's final possession in overtime to lead the Los Angeles Lakers to their sixth consecutive victory, 114-113 over Oklahoma City on Wednesday night.

James had 25 points, seven assists and six rebounds for the defending NBA champions, who survived their third consecutive overtime game. Montrezl Harrell scored 20 points, and Dennis Schröder had 19 points and seven rebounds as the Lakers rallied back from another huge early deficit and again showed just enough late-game poise to win.

"We've got a deep team, a lot of weapons, a lot of ways we can hurt you down the stretch," Lakers coach Frank Vogel said. "They gave us all we could handle, especially in the first half of these games. But we kept grinding, stayed connected, believed in each other and grinded it out."

Al Horford scored 25 points and Kenrich Williams had a career-high 24 for the Thunder, who excelled at Staples Center despite having just eight available players for back-to-back narrow losses to the defending NBA champions.

"I'm proud of our fight, the way we competed," Williams said after his third start. "Coach always emphasizes playing the whole 48. We had a little extra time more than 48, but I'm just proud of our guys."

James hit a tying 3-pointer with 19.6 seconds to play in regulation, and Luguentz Dort missed a 3 at the buzzer. Wesley Matthews then hit a tiebreaking 3-pointer for the Lakers with 41.4 seconds left in overtime.

After Dort made a driving layup, James airballed a long jumper to give Oklahoma City one last shot with 4.3 seconds to play—but James anticipated the Thunder's midcourt inbounds pass and knocked it into the backcourt, leaving the Thunder with no time to get a good shot.

Suns 125, Bucks 124

In Phoenix, Devin Booker scored 30 points, Chris Paul added 28 and the Suns extended their winning streak to four games by rallying past Milwaukee.

Milwaukee had its five-game winning streak snapped despite getting a season-high 47 points from Giannis Antetokounmpo. The Bucks had a chance to win it on the final possession, but Antetokounmpo missed a 20-foot jumper at the buzzer.

The Suns have won seven of eight and have a 15-9 record.

Bulls 129, Pelicans 116

In Chicago, Zach LaVine scored a season-high 46 points, hitting nine of Chicago's franchise-record 25 3-pointers, and the Bulls cooled off New Orleans.

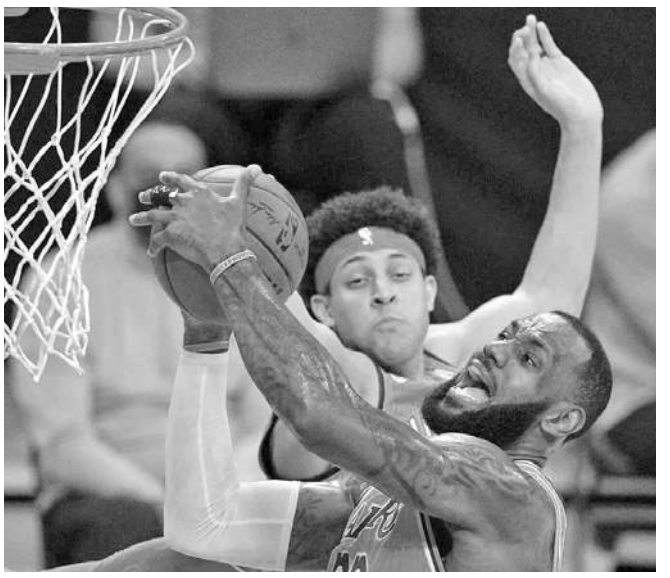
Coby White made eight 3s and scored 30 points in an impressive show by Chicago's starting backcourt. The Bulls went 25 for 47 from beyond the arc and shot 59% (48 for 81) overall.

Zion Williamson had 29 points for New Orleans, which had won four in a row. Brandon Ingram finished with 21 points on 6-for-19 shooting. Lonzo Ball scored 19 of his 21 points in the first half.

Mavericks 118, Hawks 117

In Dallas, Luka Doncic had 28 points, 10 assists and 10 rebounds and the Mavercks rallied to beat the Hawks, a week after ending a six-game losing streak in Atlanta.

The Mavericks kept the ball out of Trae Young's hands on an inbound play with 4.7 seconds remaining, and Danilo Gallinari's jumper just before the buzzer was short.



AP

Los Angeles Lakers forward LeBron James, right, shoots as Oklahoma City Thunder forward Justin Jackson defends during the first half of an NBA game Wednesday, Feb. 10, 2021, in Los Angeles

Atlanta coach Lloyd Pierce thought Young was fouled setting a screen on the final play when Willie Cauley-Stein ran into him, and said Young getting knocked down interrupted the intended play.

Nets 104, Pacers 94

In New York, Kyrie Irving had 35 points and eight assists and Brooklyn was defensively dominant in the first half in shutting down Indiana to snap a three-game losing streak.

A night after an embarrassing effort in Detroit, when the Nets yielded 38 points in the first quarter, the Pacers didn't reach that total until 8:46 remained in the third.

Irving was 17 for 17 from the throw line, career highs in both categories, and Brooklyn led by as many as 36 points. James Harden added 19 points and 11 rebounds for the Nets, who expect to get Kevin Durant back from his three-game absence for coronavirus health and safety protocol reasons when they open a five-game trip to the West on Saturday at Golden State, his former team.

Clippers 119, Timberwolves 112

In Minneapolis, Kawhi Leonard had a season-high 36 points and Lou Williams added 27 points in Los Angeles' victory over Minnesota.

Leonard and Williams hit shots down the stretch, including a pair of late 3-pointers by Leonard, to thwart Minnesota's comeback try. Los Angeles snapped its first two-game losing streak of the season.

Timberwolves star Karl-Anthony Towns had 18 points and 10 rebounds in his return to action after missing 13 games.

Nuggets 133, Cavaliers 95

In Denver, Paul Millsap scored a season-high 22 points, Michael Porter Jr. added 19 and Denver routed the Cavaliers to snap a three-game skid.

The Nuggets opened a 23-point lead in the first half, saw it increase to 34 in the third— notoriously a problem quarter for them this season— and coasted from there as Nikola Jokic and his fellow starters got the fourth quarter off. Jokic had 12 points and 12 assists.

Raptors 137, Wizards 115

In Washington, Norman Powell scored 28 points, Pascal Siakam added 26 and Toronto made 19 3-pointers in its victory over the Wizards.

Seven Raptors hit at least one 3-pointer, with Kyle Lowry leading the way with 5-for-9 shooting from deep. He finished with 21 points. Toronto shot 59% from long range (19 for 32).

Grizzlies 130, Hornets 114

In Memphis, Kyle Anderson hit a career-high six of the Grizzlies' franchise-record 23 3-pointers and scored 27 points as they beat Charlotte to snap a four-game losing streak.

Dillon Brooks added 20 points, Desmond Bane and Grayson Allen scored 18 each, and Ja Morant had 15 points and 11 assists.

Terry Rozier led the Hornets with 34 points, connecting on 12 of 17 shots. LaMelo Ball added 17 points, and Gordon Hayward and Malcolm Bridges added 15 points apiece. Bridges had 10 rebounds.

TRIBUNE SPORTS SCORES

NBA STANDINGS

EASTERN CONFERENCE

Atlantic	W	L	PCT	GB
Philadelphia	18	7	.720	0.0
Brooklyn	15	12	.556	4.0
Boston	12	11	.522	5.0
Toronto	12	13	.480	6.0
New York	11	15	.423	7.5
Central				
Milwaukee	16	9	.640	0.0
Indiana	12	13	.480	4.0
Chicago	10	14	.417	5.5
Cleveland	10	16	.385	6.5
Detroit	6	18	.250	9.5
Southeast				
Charlotte	12	14	.462	0.0
Atlanta	11	13	.458	0.0
Miami	10	14	.417	1.0
Orlando	9	16	.360	2.5
Washington	6	16	.273	4.0

WESTERN CONFERENCE

Pacific	W	L	PCT	GB
LA Lakers	20	6	.769	0.0
LA Clippers	18	8	.692	2.0
Phoenix	15	9	.625	4.0
Golden State	13	12	.520	6.5
Sacramento	12	12	.500	7.0
Southwest				
San Antonio	14	11	.560	0.0
Memphis	10	10	.500	1.5
Dallas	12	14	.462	2.5
New Orleans	11	13	.458	2.5
Houston	11	13	.458	2.5
Northwest				
Utah	20	5	.800	0.0
Portland	13	10	.565	6.0
Denver	13	11	.542	6.5
Oklahoma City	10	14	.417	9.5
Minnesota	6	19	.240	14.0

BY THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Defending champion Kenin ousted

MELBOURNE, Australia (AP) — Sofia Kenin knew this would be a tough test at the Australian Open, a potentially early end to her first attempt to defend a Grand Slam title.

Upon realizing she probably would be playing big-hitting veteran Kaia Kanepi in the second round, Kenin acknowledged, she "maybe kind of broke down a little bit."

Kenin was right to be worried. And, with Kanepi at her best, this one was over quickly. Delivering 10 aces, Kanepi powered her way past the No. 4-seeded Kenin, overwhelming the 2020 champion 6-3, 6-2 in just 64 minutes on Thursday.

"I obviously felt like I'm not there 100%—physically, mentally, my game. Everything just feels real off, obviously. It's not good," Kenin said at her news conference, where she wiped away tears.

"I mean, I just—I know I couldn't really handle the pressure," she said.

There's very little that's subtle about Kanepi's game, and there wasn't much nuance in the way she described her approach to this match: "I served really well today. I think this helped a lot. My game plan was to play aggressive, as I normally do."

That pretty much sums it up.

United States' Sofia Kenin makes a forehand return to Estonia's Kaia Kanepi during their second round match at the Australian Open tennis championship in Melbourne, Australia, Thursday, Feb. 11, 2021.

Kanepi said her winning performance wasn't merely a case of taking advantage of Kenin's nerves because "I was nervous, too . . . playing the defending champion, that was the thought."

Kanepi, 35, had beaten Kenin, 22, in their only previous matchup, part of why this was not a contest the American was looking forward to. Plus, Kanepi has been successful against some of the best on the biggest stages, with seven victories over Top 10 opponents at Grand Slam tournaments, including against then-No. 1 Simona Halep at the 2018 U.S. Open.

And then there was recent form.

Kenin walked off the court crying after a 6-2, 6-2 loss last week in a tuneup event at the site of the Australian Open and explained afterward that her left leg was sore. Kanepi, meanwhile, put an end to No. 7-ranked Aryna Sabalenka's 15-match winning streak last week and had won 16 of her past 17 outings.

With serves topping 175 kph (110 mph), Kanepi saved all seven break points she faced. And she wound up with a 22-10 edge in winners.

"I couldn't find my rhythm," Kenin said. "I was obviously way too nervous."

Her departure meant three of the top nine seeded women already were gone before midway through Day 4 at a Grand Slam tournament where routines have been disrupted by the pandemic, joining No. 8 Bianca Andreescu (the 2019 U.S. Open champion) and No. 9 Petra Kvitova (a two-time Wimbledon winner) on the sidelines.

Serena Williams remains the last woman to successfully defend a Grand Slam title—at Wimbledon in 2016.

TSL Foundation supports Rotary golf tournament

The Tan Siu Lin Foundation is backing the 2021 Rotary Club of Saipan's Open Golf Tournament that will be held tomorrow on the east course of the Laolao Bay Golf & Resort.

The TSL Foundation, led by its executive director, Merlie Tolentino, donated $1,500 to the Rotary Club of Saipan in support of the tournament, whose proceeds will be used by the latter to continue providing services to the community.

"We are deeply grateful to the Tan Siu Lin Foundation for their unwavering support to the Rotary Club of Saipan through the years. It is through the generosity and commitment of our supporters that Rotary is able to implement our program even at these difficult times," Rotary Club of Saipan president Sonya Dancoe said.

Tolentino, meanwhile, acknowledged Rotary and its hardworking members and officials for finding ways to help the community despite the challenges that everyone is facing right now due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

"We are fortunate to have the Rotary Club of Saipan and other organizations that remain dedicated to serving our community, especially at these trying times," Tolentino said.

Rotary is holding the golf tournament, as the fate of the group's main fundraising event—the Las Vegas Night—is still uncertain due to pandemic.

This weekend's competition has drawn 120 golfers and they will battle for the Low Gross and Double Peoria Top 5 honors. Hole-in-one prizes are also at stake in tomorrow's tournament with Joeten Motors and Triple J Motors offering cars for the lucky ace winner.

Raffle prizes, including a complete golf set from DPA Car Mart, will also be awarded at the banquet that will held at the Fiesta Resort & Spa Saipan. ***(PR)***

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Tan Siu Lin Foundation officials, led by executive director Merlie Tolentino, center, present the ceremonial check donation to Rotary Club of Saipan president Sonya Dancoe, third left, and officers last Wednesday in support of the Rotary Open Golf Tournament that will be held tomorrow at the Laolao Bay Golf & Resort.

SBL election Feb. 20

Saipan Baseball League is calling its members and other interested individuals to attend a general assembly meeting on Feb. 20 at the conference room of the Gilbert C. Ada Gymnasium.

The meeting is set for 10am and SBL will also elect its officers for the 2021 season.

SBL suspended its competition last year due to the COVID-19 pandemic and hopes to return to action this year in preparatio for the CNMI's hosting of the 2022 Pacific Mini Games. ***(PR)***

WESSEL

From Page 28

participants are Lina Tsukagishi, Hannah Chae, Ellie Cho, Ann Lee, Isa Nishitani, and Eun Ho Park. The boys U16 singles also has six entries in David Kwon, Daniel Kang, Dev Bachani, Sam Sulp, Min Seung Kim, and Cody Shimizu, while the girls U14 singles has only four players in Irin Chung, Hoo Wang, Anna Kwon, and Savita Sikkel.

The boys U14 singles crown will be contested by five players, led by Top 2 seeds Wataru Kadokura and June Yu. Rounding the field are Henry Choi, Takeru Jim, and Simon Tang.

In the women's singles, the participants are Serin Chung, Hye Jin Elliot, Jeane Bracken, Grace Choi, Elizabeth Culp, and Yuko Kumada, while Peter Loken will lead the entries in the men's over 40 singles event. Joining Loken in the draw are Tomas Abel, Dong Min Lee, Edwi Simbulan, Eric Abragan, Whit Altizer, John Bradkey, Paul Jang, Bishop Ryan Jimez, JP Nogues, and Gary Ramsey.

The White Coconut Classic is the Northern Mariana Islands Tennis Association's first tournament of the season and will run until next weekend.

SUSUPE

From Page 27

nity, politics has no divide, the two lawmakers worked with their respective staff and several volunteers as they cleaned and repainted the basketball court's flooring and the adjacent youth center last week.

Backboards and hoops will also be replaced through the help of Seafix, while solar lighting will be installed. As for the youth center/social hall, old tiles will be replaced, while doors, louvers, and solar lighting will be installed. Herman "Mau" Pan Guerrero and Pantiyan Sebugan donated water to clean the facilities.

"This improvement project means so much to the people of Precinct 2. The Susupe basketball court and social hall have been in a state of disrepair for years now, but at one point the site was an important recreational facility and gathering place for the community. It will be wonderful to see the place in regular use again," Rep. Tina Sablan (R-Saipan) said.

Long-time Susupe resident Joe Sizemore welcomed the improvement at the facilities, saying the youth will greatly benefit from the facelift while families can also use the social hall again.

"I still remember when we used to have our fiesta at the social hall and lots of kids would play at night when the court was still in good condition. It will be better to see our youth playing basketball with their friends than having them out on the streets where they are tempted to get into trouble," said Sizemore. "Having the lights on will also discourage people from doing bad things in that area and will help us residents keep an eye on them."

Meanwhile, Rep. John Paul Sablan (R-Saipan) said that once the renovation and other improvement works are done, they are looking at teaming up with a non-profit organization for the maintenance and management of the basketball court and youth center/social hall.

"We also plan to partner with other government agencies and NGOs to provide youth programs for the community," he added. ***(PR)***

Special Feature

Editor's Note: *The Governor's Council of Economic Advisers' Public Private Partnership initiative has drawn widespread support from the community. Various activities have been conducted and projects have been launched to rally behind the destination transformation campaign. This section will provide insights on how PPP supporters are committed to the program.*

GOVERNOR'S COUNCIL OF ECONOMIC ADVISERS
Together, We Can
Public Private Partnership

A small group had a scrimmage at the other half of the Susupe Basketball Court last weekend just a few hours after the facility was repainted.

That's how excited they were to have the court back and see it undergo a facelift after watching the facility deteriorate due a decade of lack of maintenance and vandalism plus the damage it sustained from two super typhoons.

Proving that for the community, politics has no divide, the two lawmakers worked with their respective staff and several volunteers as they cleaned and repainted the basketball court's flooring and the adjacent youth center last week.

The offices of Precinct 2 Reps. Tina Sablan (D-Saipan) and John Paul Sablan (R-Saipan) aims to bring the basketball court, along with the youth center/social hall, back in top shape as they team up with the Governor's Council of Economic Advisers in sprucing up the Susupe facilities through the Public Private Partnership initiative. The PPP campaign calls for the transformation of destination sites on all three islands, including facilities in various villages that residents use for community, recreational, and sports events.

Proving that for the commu-

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Susupe Basketball Court gets facelift

CONTRIBUTED PHOTOS
Precinct 2 Reps. Tina Sablan (D-Saipan), fifth photo clockwise and John Paul Sablan, third photo, lead the improvement project at the basketball court and youth/center social hall in Susupe.

LeBron leads Lakers past Thunder in OT

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Susupe Basketball Court gets a facelift

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9 take coaching course

By ROSELYN B. MONROYO
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REPORTER

National team players were among the nine individuals who signed up for Northern Mariana Islands Football Association "C" Coaching Course that will run for two weeks at the NMI Soccer Training Center in Koblerville.

Joshua Abragan of the men's national squad, Katrina Costales and Lilian Podziewski of the women's team, and Rinto Takahashi of the youth group started taking the course last Monday and were joined on the class by Albert Bergancia, Ivan Ilmov, Martin Jambor, Davy Laxa, and Ronnel Oacanada.

NMIFA technical director and CNMI head coach Michiteru Mita is conducting the course with the help of assistant coaches Angie Ito and Jersh Angeles and the former is pleased to see national players attending the classes.

"They are born here, they have the NMI identity. They have to start to get involved in coaching and spread and pass their passion to the next generation," Mita said.

"This is very important to develop the islands' style of football. Foreign coaches like me support the NMI football development, but in the near future, these players have to the take the initiative of developing NMI football and gradually build their own football culture," he added.

The NMIFA official added that as national team players, it is also their responsibility to help grow the sport by learning skills that will help them improve as players and later on as coaches so that they will be able to share their knowledge to the community.

Mita also took note that this year's batch of coaches/players are the first ones to take a course under NMIFA's own coaching program.

"This is first time that we are having the NMIFA 'C' License Course after we had the AFC coach convention in 2019. The course is tailor-made by NMI national coaches to suit the islands' football environment," the NMIFA technical director said.

The course will feature both theoretical and practical classes and it started with Mita providing participants guidance on coaching profession last Monday. The first week of the course then tackled coaching tactics and methods, game analysis, drills, and attacking plays. This weekend, Mita and his assistant coaches will focus on defensive plays and goalkeeping, while practical assessment will be done after the class.

For the final week, the course will discuss growth development, team management, laws of the game, women's football, injury prevention, nutrition, and hygiene and safety. The course will then conclude with practical and theoretical exams set for Feb. 21.

After a few days of session, Mita is pleased with the response of the participants.

"I can see the participants seriousness and commitment. They want to become better coaches. Their right attitude and dedication will raise the quality of our coaching course."

COTRIBUTED PHOTO
Northern Mariana Islands Football Association technical director Michiteru Mita, third left back row, watches Joshua Abragan, front row left, and Ronnel Ocanada battle for possession during a practical session in the NMIFA "C" Coaching Course last Monday at the NMI Soccer Training Center in Koblerville.

COTRIBUTED PHOTO
Coaches and participants in the NMIFA "C" Coaching Course pose for a photo before starting the practical part of their classes.

Wessel, Kadokura get Top 2 seeding

By ROSELYN B. MONROYO
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REPORTER

Last year's finalists Nason Wessel and Yutaka Kadokura are the Top 2 seeds in the boys U12 singles event in the 2021 White Coconut Tennis Classic that will kick off tomorrow at the American Memorial Park tennis courts.

Wessel, who defeated Kadokura in the 2020 championship match, 6-0, 6-3, is seeded No. 1 and will begin his title defense this Saturday as he will face the winner in the first round match between Vio Hyun and Ian Chae at the upper half of the bracket.

At the lower half, the No. 2 seed Kadokura will take on the victor in the game between the unseeded Stephen Yeom and Ji Hun Park. Completing the field in the boys U12 singles are Ki Won Lee, Landon Pudney, Ocean Kang, Henry Yeom, Eamon Tang, and Si Woo Lee.

In the girls U12 singles, the

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SAIPAN TRIBUNE
In this 2020 file photo, Nason Wessel returns to Yutaka Kadokura during their boys U12 singles title game in the White Coconut Tennis Classic at the American Memorial Park tennis courts.